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The Atlantic Monthly

APRIL 1999

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★ EVERYDAY LIFE

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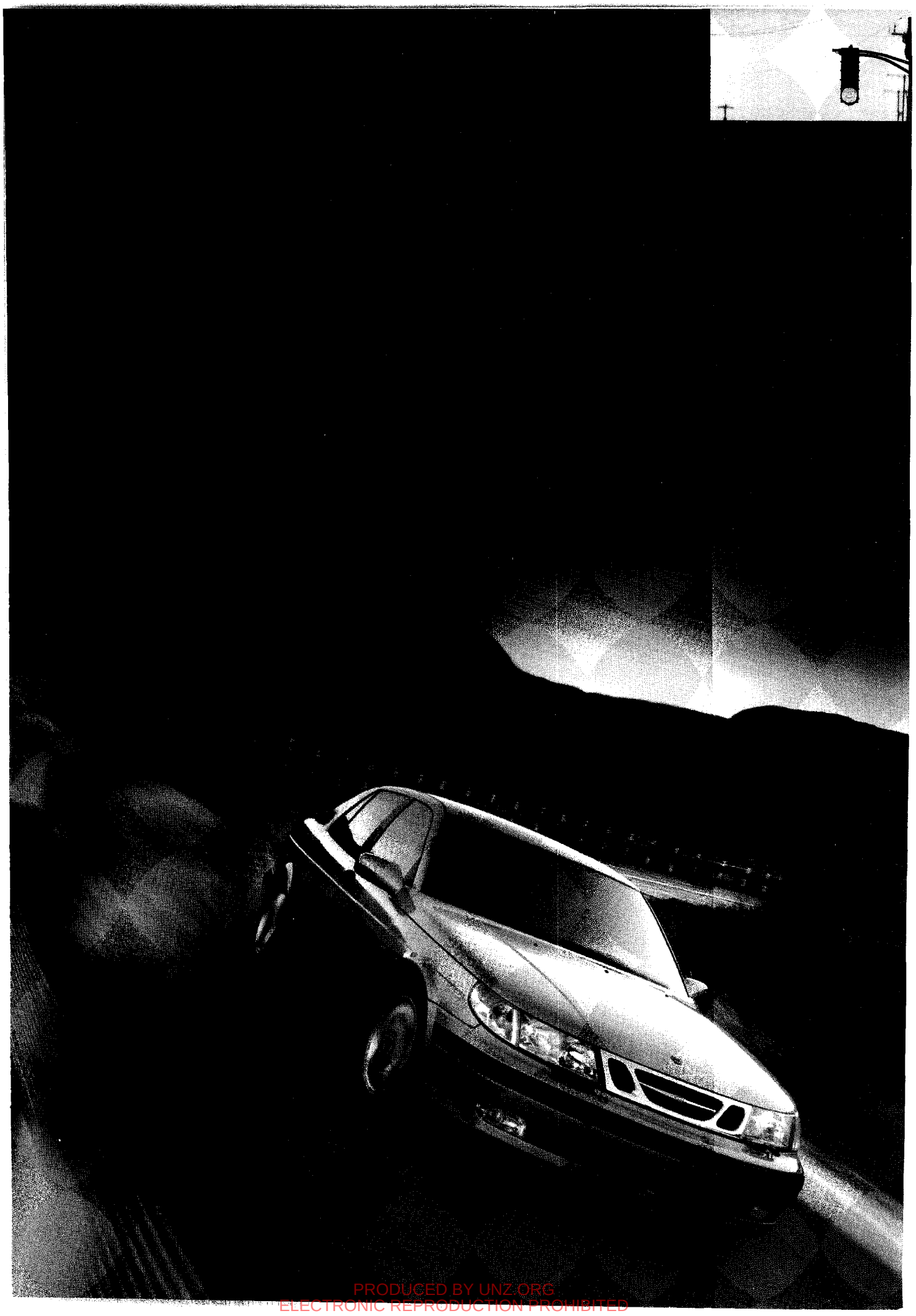

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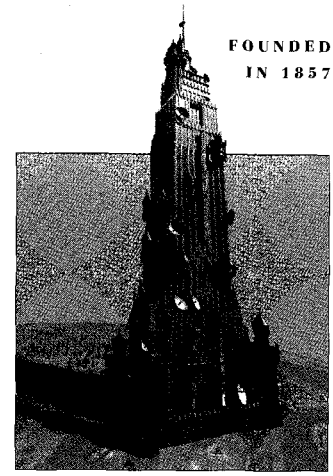

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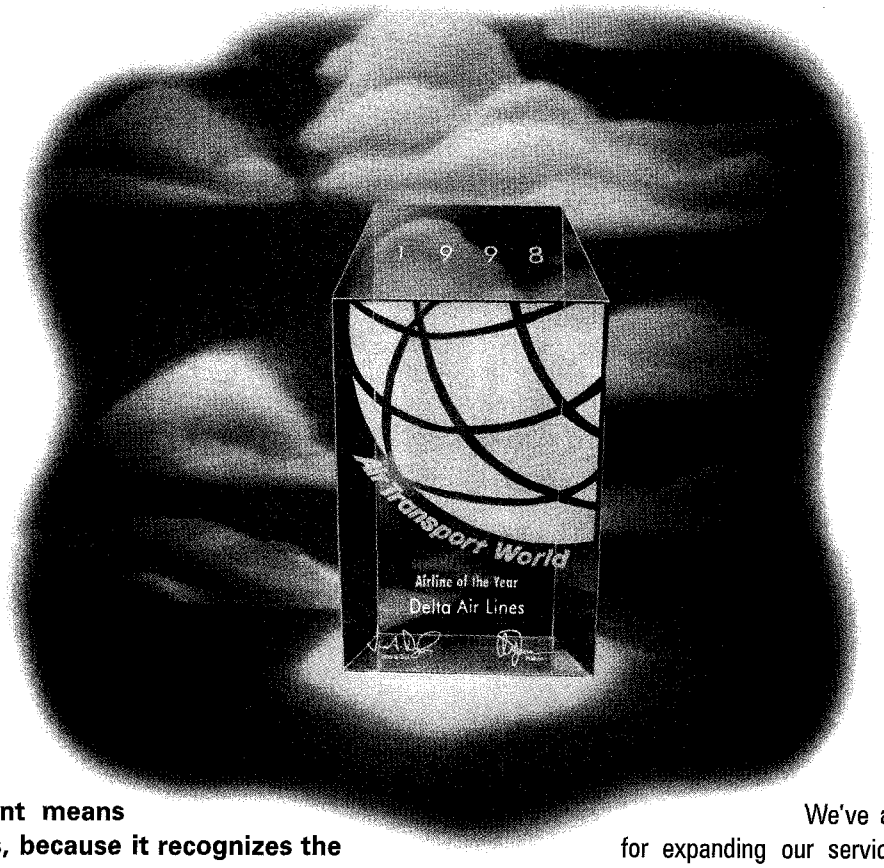

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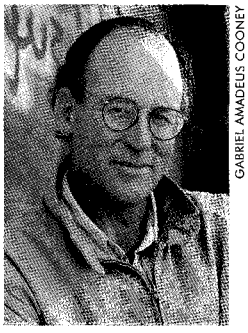
77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

It was good to see Tracy Kidder in the office the other day—good to see him *back* in the office. A couple of long memories here can recall the days when he virtually lived with us, at the magazine's old headquarters on Arlington Street. Kidder published all his early journalism in *The Atlantic*, and though never an employee, he often occupied an office, working longer hours (including some notable all-nighters) than many on the staff. "When I came knocking on *The Atlantic*'s door," he remembers, "I was very young and it was very old. I remember the pictures on the wall of all the worthies who had served the magazine, their names like a syllabus for a course in American literature. I went back to school at *The Atlantic*, and it's not much of an exaggeration to say that I learned to write there."


GABRIEL AMADEUS COONEY

"Small-Town Cop," this month's cover article, takes us to the western Massachusetts town of Northampton (pop. 30,000). Kidder has made a genre out of microcosmic America, and most of his microcosms have been considerably smaller than this one. In *The Soul of a New Machine* (1981) he reported on a team of computer engineers; in *House* (1985) he confined himself almost entirely to the construction of a private home. In 1993 he published *Old Friends*, which movingly described the friendship between two residents of a nursing home. Kidder has won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Award, and various other literary honors.

Northampton posed new challenges. "When I began," he says, "I thought the canvas small enough that I could cover all of it, but thirty thousand is a large number of souls. Writing about a town turned out to be the most daunting task I've encountered as a writer. I like to think it's a story about civilization, the shared sense of values and instincts, the unspoken rules that hold a place together."

Tom O'Connor, the subject of "Small-Town Cop," stands at the center of Kidder's forthcoming book, *Home Town*. O'Connor has been civilization's most visible defender in Northampton. He also represents one of the great tensions in small-town life: the desire to give oneself to a beguiling, intensely local place, and the contrary urge to move on to the larger world.

As for Tracy Kidder, he moves on continually, and the prospects of our ever again having him as an officemate seem slim—but it is a pleasure to welcome him back to these pages. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Charlotte Allen ("Confucius and the Scholars"), a contributing editor of *Lingua Franca*, is the author of *The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus* (1998).

Jack Beatty ("Against Inequality") is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*. His most recent book is *The World According to Peter Drucker* (1998).

Jason Brown ("Afternoon of the *Sassanoa*") teaches creative writing at Stanford University. His first collection of stories, *Driving the Heart and Other Stories*, will be published this month.

Robert Buderi ("The Virus Wars") is a former technology editor at *Business Week* and the author of *The Invention That Changed the World: How a Small Group of Radar Pioneers Won the Second World War and Launched a Technological Revolution* (1996).

Robert Crawford (cover art) is an artist whose illustrations have appeared on hundreds of book and magazine covers. He is at work on a series of paintings for a one-man show.

Peter Davison ("Poet of the Factory Floor") is the poetry editor of *The Atlantic*.

John Lewis Gaddis ("Living in Candlestick Park") is the Robert Lovett Professor of History at Yale University. His books include *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (1992) and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold-War History* (1997).

Matthew Gurewitsch ("Forget the Callas Legend") is a cultural essayist and lecturer in New York City.

Jane Kenyon ("Woman, Why Are You Weeping?") died in 1995. Her poem in this issue of *The Atlantic* will conclude *A Hundred White Daffodils*, a collection of her prose, to be published this fall.

Tracy Kidder ("Small-Town Cop") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*. His article in this issue will appear in his book *Home Town*, to be published by Random House next month.

Corby Kummer ("Touring Turin") is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*.

Susan Mitchell ("The Lost Parrot") teaches in the graduate creative-writing program at Florida Atlantic University. She is the author of *Rapture* (1992), which won the Kingsley Tufts poetry award.

Cullen Murphy ("If the Shoe Fits") is *The Atlantic*'s managing editor. His most recent book is *The Word According to Eve: Women and the Bible in Ancient Times and Our Own* (1998).

Pamela Petro ("Ambivalent Autonomy") is the author of *Travels in an Old Tongue: Touring the World Speaking Welsh* (1997). She is at work on a travel narrative about storytellers in the American South.

Stanley Plumly ("Piano") is a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park. His most recent book of poems is *The Marriage in the Trees* (1997).

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LETTERS

What Is the Koran?

The main issue in "What Is the Koran?," by Toby Lester (January *Atlantic*), is not how one looks at the Koran as a so-called historical text and analyzes it according to the principles of textual or biblical criticism but, rather, how one conceives the very notion of revelation. What corresponds to Christ as the word of God in Christianity is not the Prophet Muhammad but the Koran in Islam.

The acceptance of the Koran as the word of God suggests that the so-called historical and textual study of the Koran is tantamount to questioning the historical existence of Jesus Christ, as some people in the West have claimed. The rules of biblical criticism do not apply to the Koran as God's revelation, because what corresponds to the Bible is the *hadith* collection, which comprises the words and deeds of the Prophet of Islam as the Bible comprises the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. Both the *hadith* books and the Bible were compiled after the revelation, whereas the Koran has existed in its present form from the very beginning of Islamic revelation. To claim that the so-called history of the Koran undermines or casts doubt on its being a divine revelation is not only to misunderstand the nature of the Koran but also to go against the historical evidence.

Besides these fundamental points, the author confuses many issues. First of all, the so-called textual and historical study of the Koran does not entail the rejection of the Koran as God's word. Classical scholarship, especially the sciences of Arabic grammar, lexicography, and Koranic exegesis, is peerless. To claim that Muslims have not studied the historical and textual dimensions of the Koran is to admit an ignorance of Islam and Muslims—unless one intends to blame Muslims for taking their sacred book seriously. The author's mention of some modern Muslim thinkers as proof for his claim that the Koran is not the word of God is flawed and misleading. Although the historicist and modernist reading of the Koran represents only a small minority in the Islamic world, not even this perspective abrogates the divine origin of the Koran, as the author seems to imply. To claim to read the Koran from a certain historical point of view without denying its sacred character is one thing; to see the Koran as a text devoid of any divine substance and written by human beings—in the way many modern Westerners claim the Bible was written—is another.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

The rage of some Orthodox Muslims about the modern historical, literary, and philological study of the Koran, as described in the excellent article by Toby Lester, has close parallels in the attitudes within the Jewish religious community toward the modern study of the Bible. In the nineteenth century the critical study of Hebrew scriptures was widely regarded as not only undermining the authority of Scripture but also motivated by contempt for Judaism. Even a religious moderate like Solomon Schechter (the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America from 1902 to 1915) labeled Julius Wellhausen's higher criticism of the Pentateuch "higher antisemitism." Yet although it is true that some Christian practitioners of biblical scholarship have not been free of anti-Semitism (just as it is probably true that some Western students of the Islamic world are not free of contempt for Middle Eastern culture), the personal attitudes and motives of the scholars are not in themselves sufficient reason to discredit their work.

The results of Bible criticism have been fruitful and have even been accommodated into modern Jewish religious

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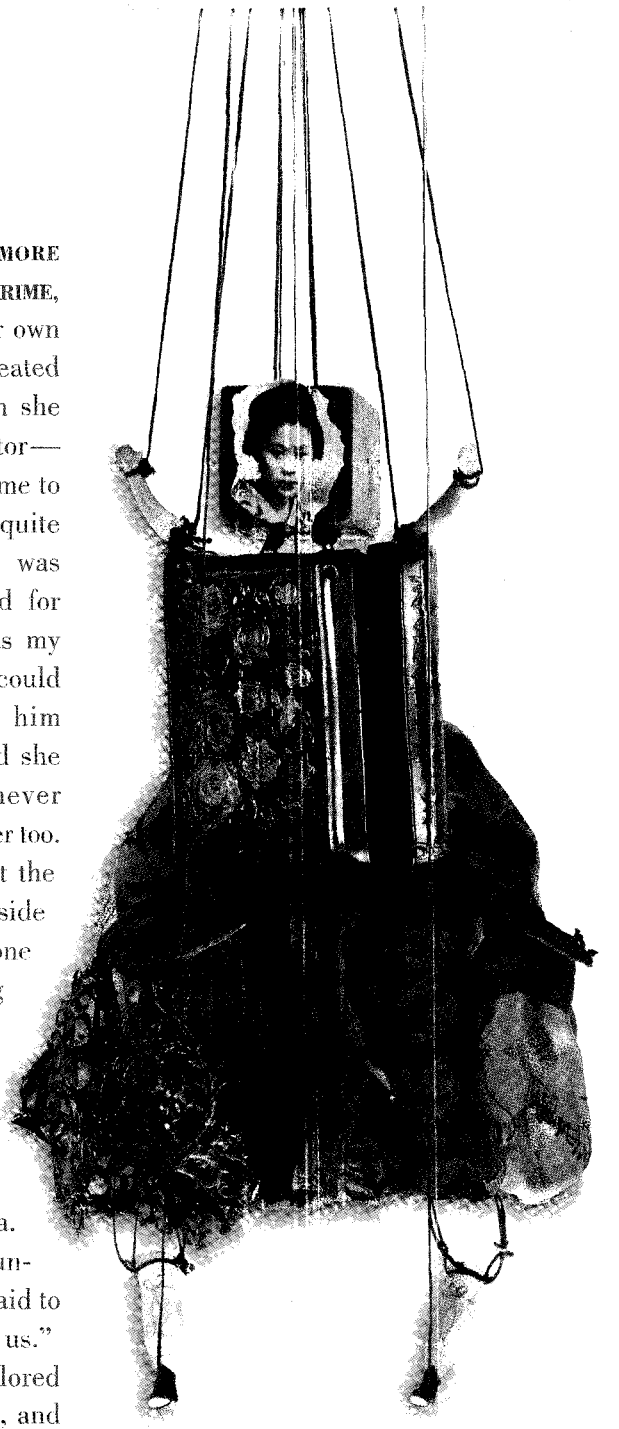
KOHINA TURNED OUT TO BE AN EVEN MORE CELEBRATED GEISHA THAN I WAS IN MY PRIME, but I don't think she ever recognized her own beauty. She never understood why men treated her the way they did. I remember when she was an apprentice, there was a certain actor—let's call him Mr. Ikeda—who used to come to the Gion district all the time. He was quite popular among the geisha because he was rarely moody, but he never once asked for me—until, that is, I took on Kohina as my younger sister and began to train her. I could tell from the start that Kohina found him enchanting: she'd seen all his films, and she was in awe, really. Yet somehow it never occurred to her he might feel attracted to her too.

Then one evening as we arrived at the Mitsuyo Teahouse, the mistress took us aside to say that Mr. Ikeda had been sitting alone a half-hour in the little room overlooking the moss garden, turning down all her offers of company, just waiting for us and no one else. We slid the door open a crack to peek in, and there he sat, drawing lines in the beaded moisture on an unopened bottle of Absolut Vodka. Beside it on the table stood two untouched glasses. "Only two glasses," I said to Kohina. "He's waiting for you, not both of us."

She was wearing a cinnamon-colored kimono with a design of autumn grasses, and she looked magnificent, but I could see she had no confidence in herself. I'm not sure what she would have done if I hadn't stepped aside and slid the door open so she had no choice but to go in. She gave me such a look! Nervous and excited all at once. The flush in her skin reminded me how she'd appeared that afternoon when she'd stepped from the bath into the chilly air, still steaming.



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thought. Today critical study of Hebrew Scripture is the foundation of biblical studies in all the liberal Jewish seminaries, including Schechter's own Jewish Theological Seminary, where it is taught that the religious message of Scripture is derived from the complex interaction of traditional and critical-historical interpretation. The assumption is that faith must be founded in truth, whatever paths lead to that truth and wherever that truth leads.

Raymond P. Scheindlin
Jewish Theological Seminary of America
New York, N.Y.

Scrutinizing religious texts as if they were doctoral dissertations in particle physics is absurd and disingenuous. These writings, from whatever source or tradition, function as elaborate, organic apologetics for systems of irrational belief. Hauling them out of their musty closets for critical examination robs them of their efficacy and purpose. So-called biblical or Koranic scholars are nothing more than overeducated Creationists, attempting to dress up ancient mythologies in costumes of scientific legitimacy.

David Fishbeck
New Brighton, Minn.

I enjoyed the well-researched "What Is the Koran?," but I wish that Toby Lester had provided a bibliography to enable readers to pursue the fascinating material he referred to.

Though he gives the title of *The Origins of the Koran*, he neglects to mention the editor and publisher of the book, and tells us nothing about the nature of the essays included.

The book's editor is Ibn Warraq, an ex-Muslim, and it is published by Prometheus Books. Warraq is the author of *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (also published by Prometheus Books), which is far more radical than anything written by Nasr Abu Zaid. Ibn Warraq examines every single tenet of Islam, and fearlessly criticizes it from a scientific point of view. In *The Origins of the Koran*, Warraq brings together some classic and very critical essays on the Koran that were written when scholars were not bound by fear or political correctness.

Tariq Ismail
St. Lys, France

One of the facts Toby Lester omits is that to this day, whenever copies of the Koran are made, copies that are incorrect are simply buried. It is very plausible that mistakes have been made in copies scribed by hand. The most common way of disposing of these copies is to bury them, and what better place to bury them than in a mosque? I think the aberrations Lester is excited about are mistakes made in copying.

Khalid Sulaiman
Walsall, England

Toby Lester exhibits a confused understanding of some aspects of Muslim thought (and makes some statements that are simply misleading) and a confusion between two interesting topics: the history of the Koran and the interpretation of the Koran. In addition, Lester makes use of references that are out of print and/or written by self-proclaimed antagonists to Islam. In other words, the author's major references can't be checked, and some of his sources are clearly bigoted—not academic.

Lester refers to the seemingly authorless *The Origins of the Koran*. His lapse in attribution is understandable, given that this collection of essays is edited by none other than the infamous, pseudonymous Ibn Warraq, author of *Why I Am Not a Muslim*—which cannot be described as anything resembling valid academic scholarship. Warraq articulated his purpose in writing the book: "This book is first and foremost an assertion of my right to criticize everything and anything in Islam—even to blaspheme." One can only assume that his goals have remained unchanged.

Similar problems abound with reference to the works of Patricia Crone—which are out of print, as are the books by John Wansbrough referred to in the article. Thus I have to question Lester's assertion that anyone "engaged in the critical study of the Koran today *must* contend with Wansbrough's two main works" (emphasis mine). Are so few people engaged in such study that two seminal works cannot be kept in print?

In the beginning of the article Lester discusses issues that involve the possibility of a historical development to the Koranic text that continued *after* Mu-

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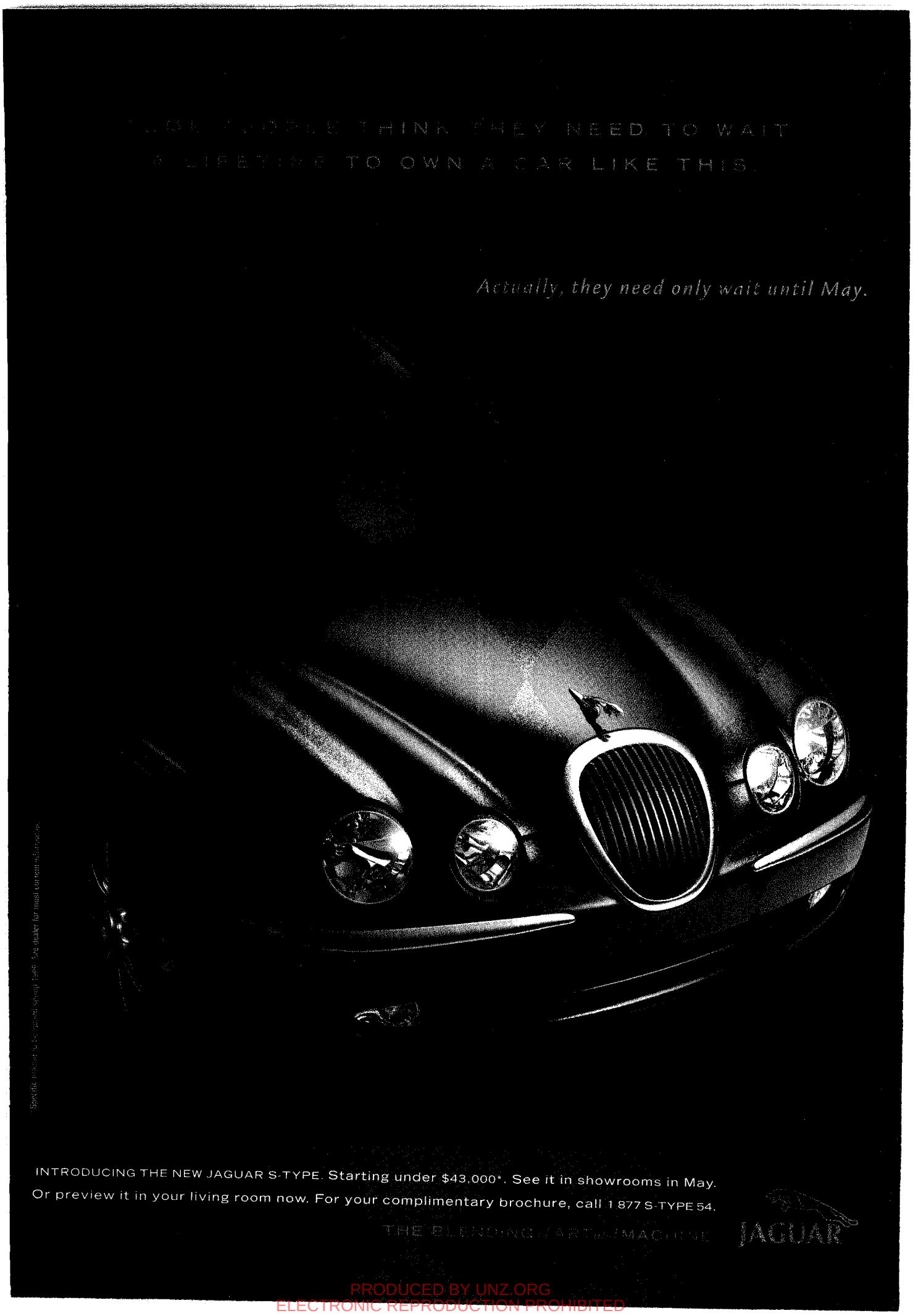
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hammad's death. At the end of the article, however, his emphasis shifts to issues related to the *interpretation* of the Koranic text—as that text's history is currently understood. The general and usual understanding of the historicity of the text is that the Koran is a collection of Muhammad's utterances at discrete, identifiable times over a period of about twenty-three years. A proper understanding must thus always refer back to the historical context, or to questions being asked by contemporaries at the time of each "incident of revelation." In that sense Muslims have always understood the Koran as being bound by history, time, place, and context.

Jeremiah D. McAuliffe Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Toby Lester replies:

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is not alone in denouncing my article as a "claim that the Koran is not the word of God," and I'm sorry to hear that it has been understood as such. I made no such claim, and intended none. What brought me to write about the Koran was curiosity: I had regularly seen newspaper and magazine stories on new approaches to the study of the Bible, and on various issues surrounding the historical Jesus, and I wondered why it was that nobody seemed to be reporting on new approaches to the study of the Koran. Did these simply not exist? That seemed unlikely for a text that is such a rich spiritual, social, linguistic, historical, and political document. If such scholarship did exist, why wasn't anybody talking about it? Indeed, why was there so little in-depth discussion of the Koran *at all* in the American media, despite the fact that this text is the foundation of a religion adhered to by almost a fifth of the world's population?

My goal was therefore journalistic, not polemical: I wanted to discover what, if any, revisionist (as opposed to simply exegetical) studies of the Koran existed, and I wanted to explore the context in which they were—or were not—taking place.

Once I had found that a variety of such studies did indeed exist (by using a library, which I heartily recommend to Jeremiah McAuliffe as a source for out-of-print books), I merely reported on what I had found, in as balanced and neutral a manner as I could. That some of this scholarship is provocative and iconoclastic does not mean that my mentioning it in print is somehow an "attack" on the Koran. If I were promoting a specific point of view, I might well have dismissed this scholarship as worthless (as does David Fishbeck) or blasphemous (as does Seyyed Hossein Nasr). As a journalist, however, I felt obliged to point out its existence.

In writing my piece I sought, as well, to expose readers to the traditional Islamic understanding of the Koran and its origins—a subject that never seems to get more than an oversimplified sentence or two in most press accounts. I devoted several pages of my article to presenting the conventional Muslim understanding of the Koran, sticking, as best I could, to the beliefs about the Koran that are shared by Islam's various sects. Nobody has yet written to take me to task for this account, and many non-Muslims have told me of their surprise at learning just how similar in content and message the Koran and the Bible are. It was my hope that by introducing readers to conventional as well as unconventional approaches to the study of the Koran, I was offering them the opportunity to evaluate these approaches for themselves. In this light, I think Khalid Sulaiman's approach is a good one: rather than writing my article off as an insult to Islam, he simply points out that textual deviations in the Yemeni Koran fragments don't necessarily require a revised understanding of Islamic history.

David Fishbeck's dismissal of religion and the critical-historical study of it is facile: whether or not one believes in religious texts like the Bible and the Koran, the fact is that they have exerted centuries of enormous influence on culture, politics, language, literature, and morality—as have the studies that have arisen to explain them. This is all worth serious scrutiny.

When Evil Is Cool

Roger Shattuck's article "When Evil Is 'Cool'" (January *Atlantic*) left me puzzled—I could not figure out what prompted it. Most of Shattuck's examples, save *Pulp Fiction*, were from the past, yet his thesis seemed to be that we are today in danger of capitulating to the idea of evil as cool. Is he warning us against Nietzsche? No one actually reads Nietzsche anymore, and if people did, they wouldn't understand him. Is Shattuck saying that we are surrounded not only by Leopolds and Loebs but also by Darrows?

William L. Scurrah
Tucson, Ariz.

Roger Shattuck's otherwise illuminating piece vastly oversimplifies the issue of Nietzsche's attitude toward evil. Shattuck seems to use Nietzsche as an exemplar of someone who displays "an attitude of assent and approval toward moral and radical evil, as evidence of superior human will and power." At any rate, Shattuck thinks that "the twentieth century has conferred astonishingly widespread respect for metaphysical evil by honoring the thought of Nietzsche." To be sure, Nietzsche's complex ideas (for example, the "will to power," "beyond good and evil," and the "superman") have been widely misinterpreted as lauding the triumph of the powerful over the weak or, worse, as harbingers of Nazism. The work of Walter Kaufmann and others has largely refuted this view. Kaufmann points out that the virtues Nietzsche praised are honesty, courage (especially moral courage), generosity, courtesy, and intellectual integrity. Although Nietzsche used "the will to power" as an explanatory concept (to explain, for example, why people behave in "neurotic" ways), he did not espouse the coercive use of power. Indeed, Kaufmann reminds us that "of all the sundry manifestations of the will to power, Nietzsche probably approved only of the striving for freedom." Furthermore, real "power" and morality for Nietzsche consisted not in triumphing over others but in "self-overcoming"—that is, in the perfection and taming of the self. In this light it is very hard to see how Shattuck can construe Nietzsche's views as typifying an "attitude of assent" toward moral and radical evil.

Ronald Pies
Lexington, Mass.

Roger Shattuck's essay on how evil is becoming cool presents interesting perspectives but misses the core distinction. The great moral divide is between those

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who believe that purposely hurting others can be good and those who do not. People in the first category quarrel endlessly over the question of who deserves to suffer and who doesn't. Viewed from the other side of the moral divide, their quarrels and quibbles are just another case of pots calling kettles black. Their selective condemnations of evil, ostensibly in the name of human rights, are themselves foundations of hate.

In today's political climate the most pervasive instance of cool harm-doing, one not even mentioned by Shattuck, is so-called retributive justice—literally repaying an injury with suffering in return. Retribution's root idea is that adding more suffering to the world can be better than always opting for less—that increasing the world's total anguish and affliction is sometimes morally right. As our political taste for punition steadily grows, retributive justice is becoming synonymous with justice itself.

Good can never triumph so long as evil is done in its name. It will never prevail until good people accept the humane principle that *any* act to inflict suffering is wrong unless it is honestly meant as the most humane alternative that the situation presents, giving due regard to the interests of everyone affected.

John A. Humbach
Pace University
White Plains, N.Y.

Roger Shattuck replies:

My examples drew on literature from earlier periods in part because the blandishments held out by cool evil today have roots deep in our past. We can learn from those roots in Diderot and Baudelaire, in Emerson and Hawthorne—and in the classics and the Bible.

I assure William Scurrah that Nietzsche is widely and attentively read today in college courses in many departments. And I assure Ronald Pies that Walter Kaufmann, a fine translator, produces misleading commentaries that launder Nietzsche's writings, leaving out their most troubling content. That content may fall under John Humbach's "retributive justice," which he feels I overlooked. Perhaps so. However, the Orestes story, which I did bring in, embodies the crucial struggle to transform retributive justice (or retaliation, eye for an eye) into distributive justice (the rule of law).

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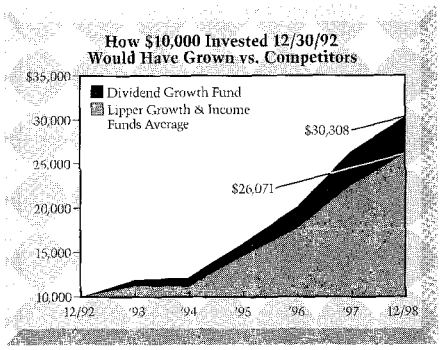

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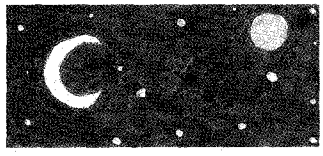
THE APRIL ALMANAC

Arts & Letters

April is National Poetry Month, and the American Poetry & Literacy Project will be handing out free volumes of poetry, including 60,000 copies of a new anthology of travel and adventure poems titled *Songs for the Open Road.* Some 40,000 copies will be placed in the glove compartments of new Volkswagens—the largest single effort in the APLP's history. Others will be given away on Amtrak trains, at airports and other travel-related sites, and to Peace Corps volunteers. The APLP was founded in 1993 by the late Joseph Brodsky, the 1991 U.S. poet laureate, and Andrew Carroll, a college student who sought out Brodsky after the latter spoke about the need to make poetry more widely available. It has since given away at least 250,000 books of poetry. This year, as in the past, the group will also give books—not necessarily *Songs*—to people in hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, hotels, subways, and, on April 15 (tax day), post offices.



The Skies

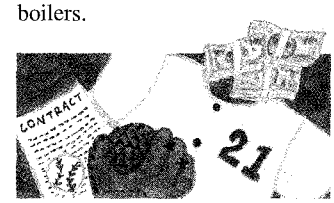
April **1**: Venus, which shines in the west just after sunset all month, lies above fainter Saturn tonight. **2**: Mars, which this month is at its brightest since 1990, is near the waning Moon tonight and will be near the almost-full Moon on the 29th. **4**: At 2:00 A.M. local time, Daylight Saving Time begins. Set clocks ahead one hour. **18**: The crescent Moon, Venus, and the red star Aldebaran lie close together in the western sky this evening. **22**: The Lyrid meteor shower peaks early this morning. **30**: Full Moon, also known this month as the Fish, Sprouting Grass, or Pink Moon.

Food

April **4**: Easter. This year, judging from recent buying patterns, the nation's children, and probably some adults, will receive more than 600 million "Peeps" (marshmallows shaped like chicks)—a record-breaking number. Peeps have been made for more than 50 years, and though they were out of vogue in the 1970s and 1980s, sales have risen dramatically in recent years, tripling since 1994. Industry observers offer two explanations: Peeps, though loaded with sugar, are fat-free; and they are benefiting from nostalgic Baby Boomers' interest in so-called retro food. Other foods that have recently come back into favor after a long hiatus include fondue (fondue pots, for many years almost impossible to find, are now sold at upscale stores), and meatloaf and pineapple upside-down cake (recipes for both abound on the Internet).

Demographics

April begins the peak season for the generation of scrap tires, as many vehicle owners buy new tires in preparation for heavier driving during the summer or to replace snow tires. The number of tires discarded in a year has risen steadily along with the number of cars and trucks and the miles driven; it now stands at about 270 million. The development of potentially longer-lasting tires has done little to stem the increase, largely because many drivers neglect to follow basic maintenance procedures such as rotating and balancing tires and checking the pressure. Disregard for such measures is thought to be especially prevalent among those who lease their cars—a group whose number is sharply rising. Some good news can be found in another recent trend: the growth of secondary markets for old tires. The rubber from more than 70 percent of this year's scrap tires will be put to new uses—for example, as fuel for cement kilns and paper-mill boilers.



Government

April **4**: Baseball season opens today. Fans can be relatively sure of a strike-free season, owing to the passage last year of the Curt Flood Act, which revokes part of a 1922 Supreme Court decision exempting baseball owners from antitrust laws. The exemption, based on the idea that baseball was not a business, prevented players from suing owners over anti-competitive practices; many have blamed it for the eight major-league strikes since 1972. The new act allows players to sue owners, but only over contract negotiations, and only if the players' union first disbands. It allows no suits pertaining to relocation or league expansion—and yet it is named for a player who sued the league, unsuccessfully, in 1970 because he wanted the right to refuse a trade.

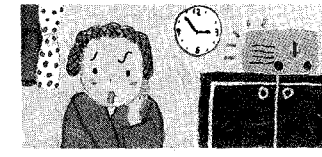
Health & Safety

The first National Alcohol Screening Day takes place on April **8**. Sponsored by a variety of organizations, ranging from Mothers Against Drunk Driving to the National Interfraternity Conference, the project will offer people in malls, hospitals, schools, and other venues the opportunity to hear a presentation on alcohol problems and to fill out a questionnaire

aimed at pinpointing risky drinking. It will give participants concerned about their alcohol consumption referrals to health-care professionals. **23**: Many of the nation's highways and pedestrian bottlenecks will have altered surroundings as of today, when a ban against billboard advertisements for tobacco products goes into effect. The ban is part of last year's settlement between 46 states and the leading tobacco companies. Many of the billboards that once touted cigarettes and related products will now host anti-smoking messages, paid for by the industry under the terms of the settlement.

50 Years Ago

Charles W. Morton, writing in the April, 1949, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "As a vehicle for the rough stuff in American life, the radio forum is rapidly coming to the fore. Voices, personalities, and language . . . approximate the goings-on in the Silver Dollar Saloon when Cactus Jack and his ruffians blow in of a Saturday night. . . . On almost every program the forum tries to include one or two of the most rabid extremists who can be found on a given issue, and to pit them against more normal folk. The more preposterous their ideas, so the theory goes, the more interesting to the listener will be their collision with saner minds. It would be hard to think of any prominent quack or eccentric of the past ten years who has not been served. . . . Against them, a speaker of courtesy and conscience can scarcely make himself heard."



Illustrations by Mari Takabayashi

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Ethical Hacker

Name:	Nick Simicich
Job Description:	Help determine whether or not a mission-critical information system is susceptible to hackers.
Experience:	Protected the electrical power infrastructure in the U.S. from cyber-jackers bent on misdirecting electricity with bogus information.
Unofficial Title:	"Paid Professional Paranoid"
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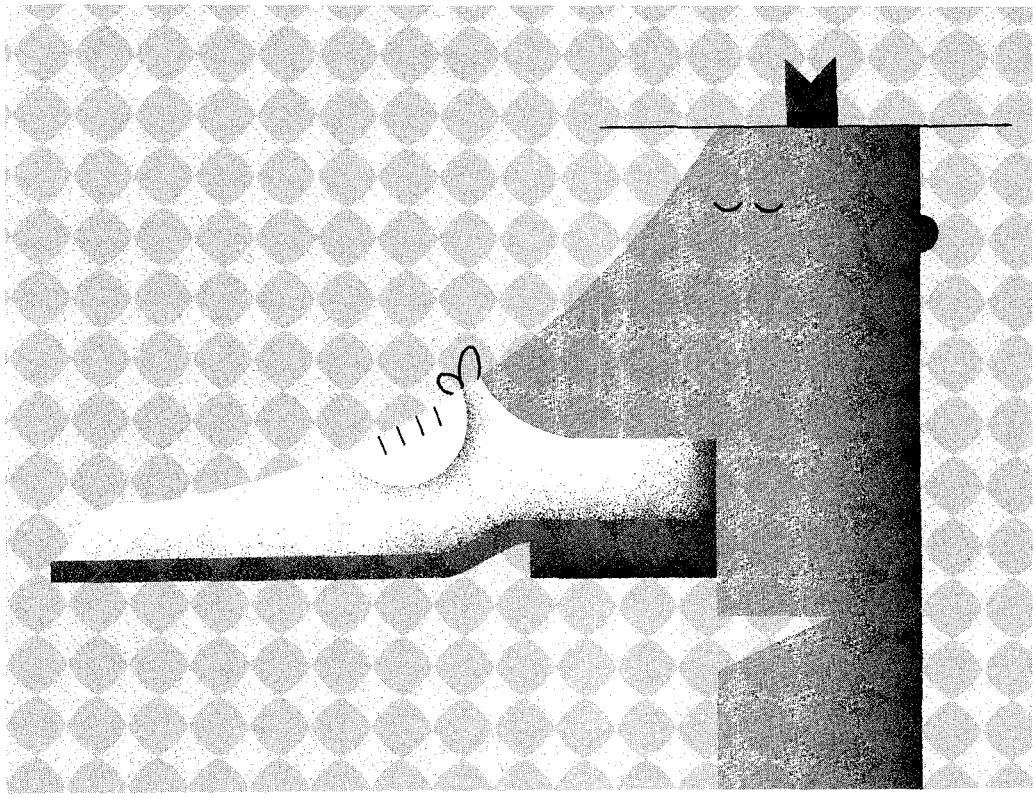
If the Shoe Fits

In search of a formula for everything

by Cullen Murphy

FOR most of my adult existence the only data that have mattered when buying new clothes are the dimensions for "neck/arm" and for "waist/inseam." These dimensions, 15½/33 and 34/30, by now possess an almost sacral quality—they are the Avogadro's Number and the Planck's (More or Less) Constant of my sartorial life, arrived at with technology no more sophisticated than a tailor's fabric measure.

It seems so quaint now, in an age of whole-body-scanning systems. A prototype of such a system was unveiled a few years ago by the Computerized Anthropometric Research and Design Laboratory, a division of the U.S. Air Force, which hopes to create better-fitting uniforms and protective equipment. The Air Force system uses laser beams to scan as many as two million body-surface reference points. The transfer of such technology to the civilian sector may have already begun. A swimsuit maker called Second Skin uses a scanner to construct personalized beachwear based on "up to 28 different vital body statistics." Levi Strauss & Co. has installed in many stores what it calls the Original Spin Program; computerized morphological data are transmitted to a team of cutters and stitchers, who within a few days send back an individualized garment—"jeans that scream 'Yes,'" in the words of Levi Strauss. The contours of the human form will soon be susceptible in every particular to remote probes and supple algorithms, down to the last hollow and hump, the last ripple and ridge.



"The rules that describe nature seem to be mathematical," the physicist Richard Feynman pointed out in a famous series of lectures some decades ago. Indeed, Feynman went on, mathematical character amounts to "a kind of miracle." Feynman gave the example of gravity, whose force varies according to the inverse square of the distance between two bodies. The quest for the underlying mathematics of the physical universe has been much publicized, and has sometimes led into outlandish territory. But it is the parallel quest for the underlying mathematics of ordinary experience that has truly become pervasive in our lives.

Is there anything we won't try to render in terms of mathematics? I don't mean the straightforward stuff, involving basic dimensions—for instance, elapsed time since the Big Bang ($t_0 = c/\sqrt{6\pi G\rho_0}$, according to Einstein, where c is the speed of light, G is Newton's gravitational constant, and

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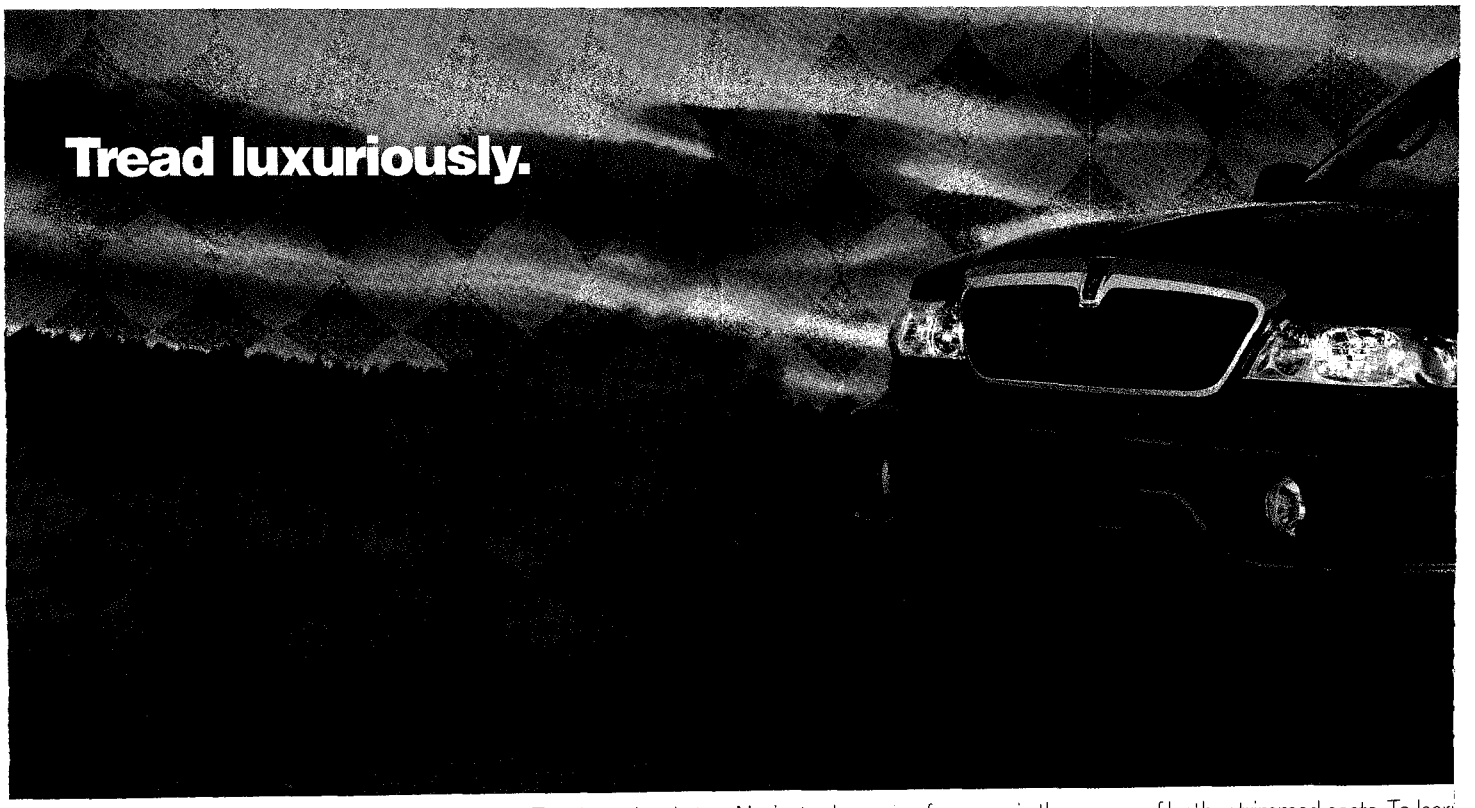
ρ_0 is the energy density of the universe), or the extent in square meters of a human being's body-surface area ($BSA=\sqrt{ht\ [cm] \times wt\ [kg]/3600}$), or the length of time required to heat the interior of mashed potatoes in a microwave oven (a formula too complicated to display). I have in mind, rather, calculations involving social processes, individual behavior and performance, even ethical norms.

To judge from studies I have come across, mathematical scrutiny has recently been trained on such diverse matters as the propensity of twins to experience failed marriages ("Genetic Influence on Risk of Divorce"—*Psychological Science*); the bizarre ability of cats to tolerate plunges from vast heights better than from middling ones ("How Cats Survive Falls From New York Skyscrapers"—*Natural History*); the worldwide validity of the six-degrees-of-separation phenomenon, as epitomized by the Kevin Bacon game ("Collective dynamics of 'small-world' networks"—*Nature*); and the roles of debasement, manipulation, and the threat of infidelity in the success of long-term monogamy ("Mate Retention Tactics in Married Couples"—*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*).

I have seen formulas encapsulating a Generosity Index, a Richter Scale for Risks, a Currie Scale for Health Warnings, and a Georgia County Moral Tragedy Index. A professor at Princeton has devised an equation for determining the quality of French red-wine vintages long before they are drinkable. Specialists under the auspices of the National Bureau of Economic Research have produced equations for determining the optimal size of a modern nation-state. The Texas-based Semantics Research Corporation promotes an Utterance Crispness Index, which defines the crispness of any statement as the quotient of "number of utterances containing no form of the verb *to be*" divided by "total number of utterances"—a maximum score of 1 representing ultimate, perhaps unbearable, crispness. (Hemingway's novels score 0.64; Bill Clinton's grand-jury testimony scores 0.24.)

New York's mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, has endorsed a new Urban Happiness Quotient to monitor trends in the city's mental and social health, now that he thinks they're improving. The formula runs as follows: $UHQ=(O^a \times S^b \times E^c)/N$, where O consists of a statistical basket of "outcomes" (for example, infant mortality rate, murder rate); S consists of a basket of "supports" (spending on education, spending on the police); E consists of various "economic factors" (trends in per capita income, average hourly wage); and N consists of numerically expressed "needs" (number of homeless people, number of boarded-up buildings).

Many have surmised, often on the basis of bitter personal experience, that having the social status of "dork" in the middle-school dominance hierarchy can have a palpable impact on academic achievement and self-esteem. That surmise has been subjected to vigorous cost/benefit analysis by a Cornell University professor, John H. Bishop, in a monograph titled "Nerd Harassment, Incentives, School Priorities and Learning." This is not the place to review the full array of Bishop's calculations, but in the portion describing the determinants of student effort—$(w + \theta + j)\ [AE^{\alpha}(QX)^{\beta}] -$



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$[C_O E^{\eta} + c_j \theta L]$—the final element, $c_j \theta L$, represents "the marginal costs of efforts that result from the fear that one's classmates will think you are a *'nerd . . . teachers pet . . . or acting white.'*"

Mathematical equations have begun to play a role even in the realm of post-death experience. A few years ago the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention divulged that it had come up with a methodology for determining what percentage of people in a given locale were likely candidates for hell; before anyone thought better of the idea, the board released county-by-county estimates for the entire United States. According to news reports, the estimates were derived from a "secret formula" that relied on grim assumptions about various sectarian and demographic groups. The precise methodology was never revealed.

One of the premises of Isaac Asimov's series of *Foundation* novels, set in the far future, is that the social and physical sciences will have developed to such a degree that all aspects of human behavior and social evolution can be not only rendered into mathematics but also projected ahead in time. In the books a self-appointed but benign cadre of psychohistorians keep watch for deviations from optimal behavior, poised to intervene. The calculations they monitor are minutely detailed.

> He depressed a lever on his side of the desk and the room was in darkness. But only for a moment, since with a gradually livening flush, the two long walls of the room glowed to life. First, a pearly white, unrelieved, then a trace of faint darkness here and there, and finally, the fine neatly printed equations in black. . . .

As this scene unfolds, the leader of the psychohistorians, the First Speaker, extends a bony finger and indicates a distant patch of numbers—his own modest contribution to The Plan—for the benefit of a young protégé: "'This,' he said, 'is mine.' A fine red line encircled two forking arrows and included six square feet of deductions along each path." As it happens, the whole Plan is eventually upset by someone with an unforeseen genetic mutation—"genes that scream 'No,'" one might say.

Theoretical scientists may have abandoned certainty for chaos, but expect the next generation of real-world formulas to become more individualized and forward-looking. Baseball statisticians have made progress in this field already, with projection systems like Vladimir and Brock6, whose equations aspire to trace the future career trajectories of individual players. When will they enjoy their breakout years? When will they collapse? The Southern Baptist perdition formula begs to be refined, and surely will be, from a measure of aggregate probability into one of specific personal destiny. Original Spin currently includes a bar code with every article of clothing so that exact duplicates can be ordered when new clothing is needed. This primitive reordering system will no doubt become more anticipatory and pragmatic, and automatically factor advancing age and perhaps an intervening holiday season into a customer's personalized size trajectory.

When the time comes, I'll be the one with the bony finger indicating a distant patch of numbers—15½/33 and 34/30. "This," I will say, "is mine."

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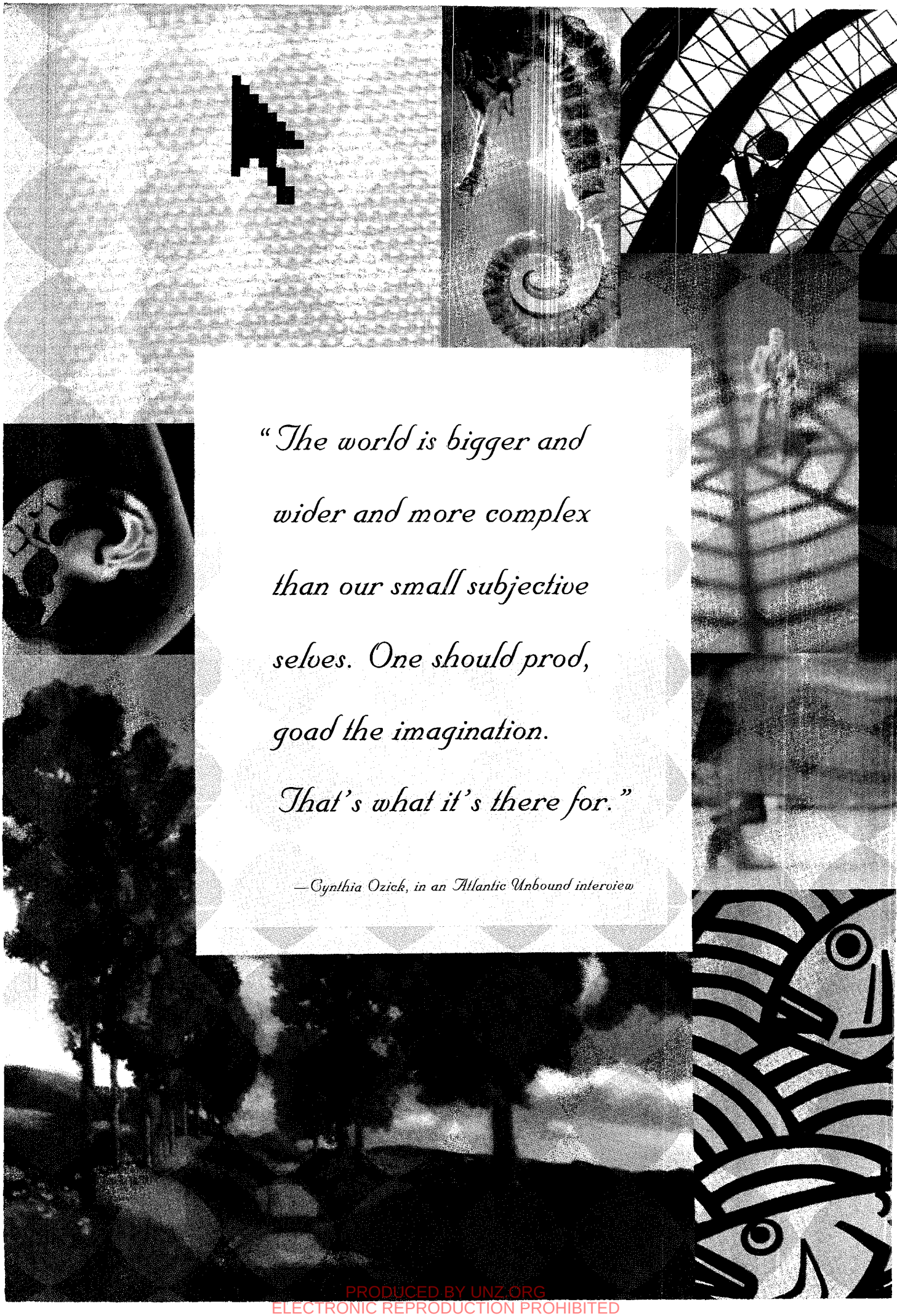

"The world is bigger and wider and more complex than our small subjective selves. One should prod, goad the imagination. That's what it's there for."

—Cynthia Ozick, in an Atlantic Unbound interview

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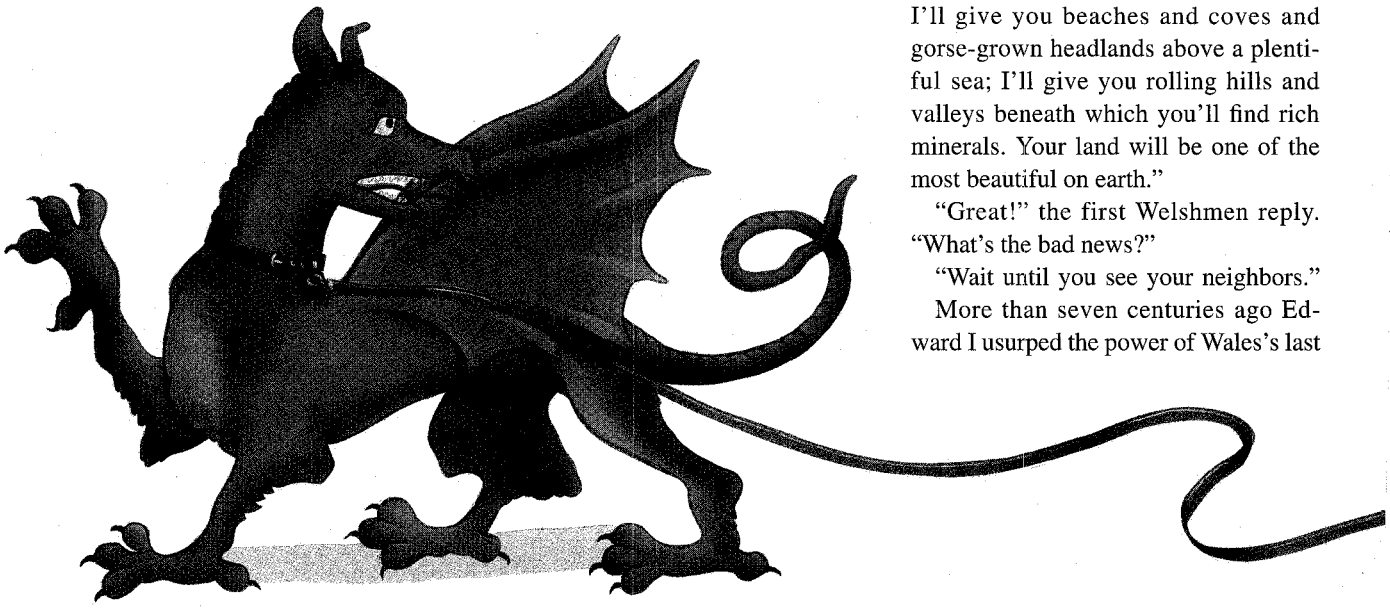

Ambivalent Autonomy

The vote to create an independent regional authority did not come automatically to Wales, as it did to Scotland. The startlingly close vote reveals much about a nation that has both embraced and resisted a colonial mentality

by Pamela Petro

FEW people in Wales went to bed early on the night of September 18, 1997. A week before, in Scotland, Tony Blair's Labour government had held a referendum asking voters if they were for or against a Scottish Parliament—in effect, asking the Scots whether they would prefer to govern themselves for a change. More than 70 percent of them had said yes. But in Wales the referendum vote on devolution—the movement to decentralize political power within the United Kingdom—was expected to be a squeaker. Unlike the Scots, who gained a Parliament with legislative powers, the Welsh were being asked to approve a weaker, albeit democratically elected, Assembly that would receive a block grant to administer the principality.

At 3:30 A.M. on September 19, with nineteen of the twenty-two Welsh counties reporting results, the BBC forecast a victory for the campaign against an Assembly, and the first big defeat for New Labour. Then, around 4:00 A.M., the count was received from Carmarthenshire, which had voted heavily in favor of devolution. The final tally came to 559,419 for the Assembly, and 552,698 against, with just over 50 percent of the electorate having bothered to vote. The Welsh had chosen the path toward effective participatory democracy by 6,721 votes.

An old joke about God and the first Welshmen has God saying, "I've got good news and bad news. I'm going to give you soaring mountains with thick green flanks, perfect for grazing sheep; I'll give you beaches and coves and gorse-grown headlands above a plentiful sea; I'll give you rolling hills and valleys beneath which you'll find rich minerals. Your land will be one of the most beautiful on earth."

"Great!" the first Welshmen reply. "What's the bad news?"

"Wait until you see your neighbors."

More than seven centuries ago Edward I usurped the power of Wales's last native-born ruler, naming his own first-born son the Prince of Wales; Wales's legal system was dismantled; its mineral wealth was commandeered to fuel an empire whose first, involuntary colony it became; and its language was squeezed almost to a dying breath by the boa constrictor of English. Recent history hasn't been much more cheerful. From 1979 to 1997, while England (though not Scotland) voted in one Conservative government after another, the majority of Welsh voters kept up unwavering support for the Labour Party. The result was a "democratic deficit" so great that the economist Gerald Holtham assessed the situation as "nothing resembling democracy" and "unique in Western Europe." Plaid Cymru (pronounced Plide *Kum*-ree), the National Party of Wales, called for Welsh autonomy as early as 1925. It likens the principality to a colonial governor-generalship run by the Welsh Office and by agencies staffed as often as not by Tory appointees with no accountability to the Welsh electorate. Next month the office will be replaced by the National Assembly.

Are the Welsh afraid of freedom? When James Callaghan's Labour government put the issue of limited self-rule to Wales, in 1979, voters trounced it by a ratio of four to one. Even the Welsh cited as reasons a historical strain of national timidity and a lack of self-confidence bred into the country through centuries of subservience. A visiting African

Illustrations by Jean Hirashima

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journalist told a local reporter in 1997, "The colonial mentality is more firmly entrenched in your country than in any other I have been to."

Yet devolution is not, as some of its Welsh opponents fear, a sly way of breaking apart the United Kingdom. It is aimed at sharing power, so as to avoid another democratic deficit. How much power is shared has so far depended on the eagerness of the recipients—and on their political maturity, as perceived by the Westminster Parliament and Whitehall.

Unlike members of the Scottish Parliament, who will be able to initiate laws, National Assembly members will only be able to vote on secondary legislation. This is actually a significant responsibility. The Westminster Parliament traditionally votes on principles—decreeing, for example, that every child in Britain must have an education—but does not sully itself with the minutiae of administration. The new Assembly, not appointed ministers, will now see to the details. (Issues of foreign policy and macroeconomics, however, will remain under the jurisdiction of the British government.)

That Blair's government offered Scotland but not Wales a full-powered Parliament reflects the fact that Welsh differences with the English have been mainly religious and cultural, whereas Scots differences have been political and legal. Because Scotland was incorporated into the United Kingdom at the relatively late date of 1707, it had already evolved its own modern legal and education systems, which the British government allowed it to maintain.

Wales, in contrast, was officially appropriated into the United Kingdom by Henry VIII's Acts of Union, in 1536 and 1543, before it had developed the apparatus of a modern state. Like Siamese twins, two distinct nations grew up sharing political, legal, and education organs. Methodism, social radicalism, rugby, and especially Welsh became the apolitical badges of national identity. It's telling that for most of this century the nationalist movement in Wales has sought not only political independence but parity and protection for the native tongue, which is called Cymraeg (pronounced Kum-*rīg*). Although Welsh-speakers were persecuted in the United Kingdom for more than 400 years, and today only about 20 percent of the population speaks the language, it is currently on a strong upswing and is becoming essential in the media and the civil service.

The 1979 Welsh referendum was the culmination of a nationalist movement begun in the hurly-burly of the sixties, and stigmatized for its vaguely "revolutionary" associations. At that time the question was essentially nationalist: whether Welsh identity should have a political dimension. Only later did the question become constitutional: whether an Assembly would improve the quality of Welsh representation within a reformed United Kingdom. (Many people believe that the United Kingdom is in the midst of the greatest—if unacknowledged—constitutional reorganization since 1688, and that devolution is the first step in a process likely to include not only a reformation of the House of Lords but also a new electoral system.) In 1979 the notion of limited self-governance was bound up with civil-rights-style protests in behalf of Welsh. Though modest in its goals (bilingual signs on roads, in post offices, and the like), the language campaign increased the fears of English-speakers that a semi-autonomous Wales would mean an extremist Welsh-speaking Wales—a Wales in which they would become second-class citizens. No one in 1979 could have predicted that the very success of the campaign to protect Welsh—which has made it the lingua franca of hip rock bands and common enough to be heard daily on radio and television—would render language a nonissue in the 1997 campaign.

Coupled with the coincidence of Welsh nationalism and constitutional reform, this defusing of the language threat molded devolution into an issue that the Labour Party mainstream could embrace. Why, then, did the referendum win so narrowly?

In Ceredigion, in the heart of Welsh-speaking western Wales, the hills undulate around farmsteads, and there are more sheep and dairy cows than people. Six months after the referendum, John Morgan, the owner of a woolen mill, explained why he had voted no. He sounded apologetic, as if he'd already begun to doubt his reasoning. "I'm as Welsh as the next person," Morgan said, "and I'm proud that Welsh is the language of my home. My children speak Welsh. But I voted against [the Assembly]. At the end of the day it's just another tier of government. And who's going to pay for it? The taxpayer, that's who."

The question of who would foot the bill for the Assembly resonated with an already highly taxed public that was leery of funding "just a big county council that'll give jobs to the boys down in Cardiff," as a waitress in Aberystwyth described it. The promise by Peter Hain, the undersecretary of state for Wales and a Labour Party member, that the running costs of the Assembly would consume only 0.03 percent of the British government's £7 billion (about $11 billion) block grant to Wales was dismissed as a politician's toeing the party line. A general cynicism toward *any* expression of government undermined the Welsh

Methodism, social radicalism, rugby, and especially Welsh became the badges of national identity.

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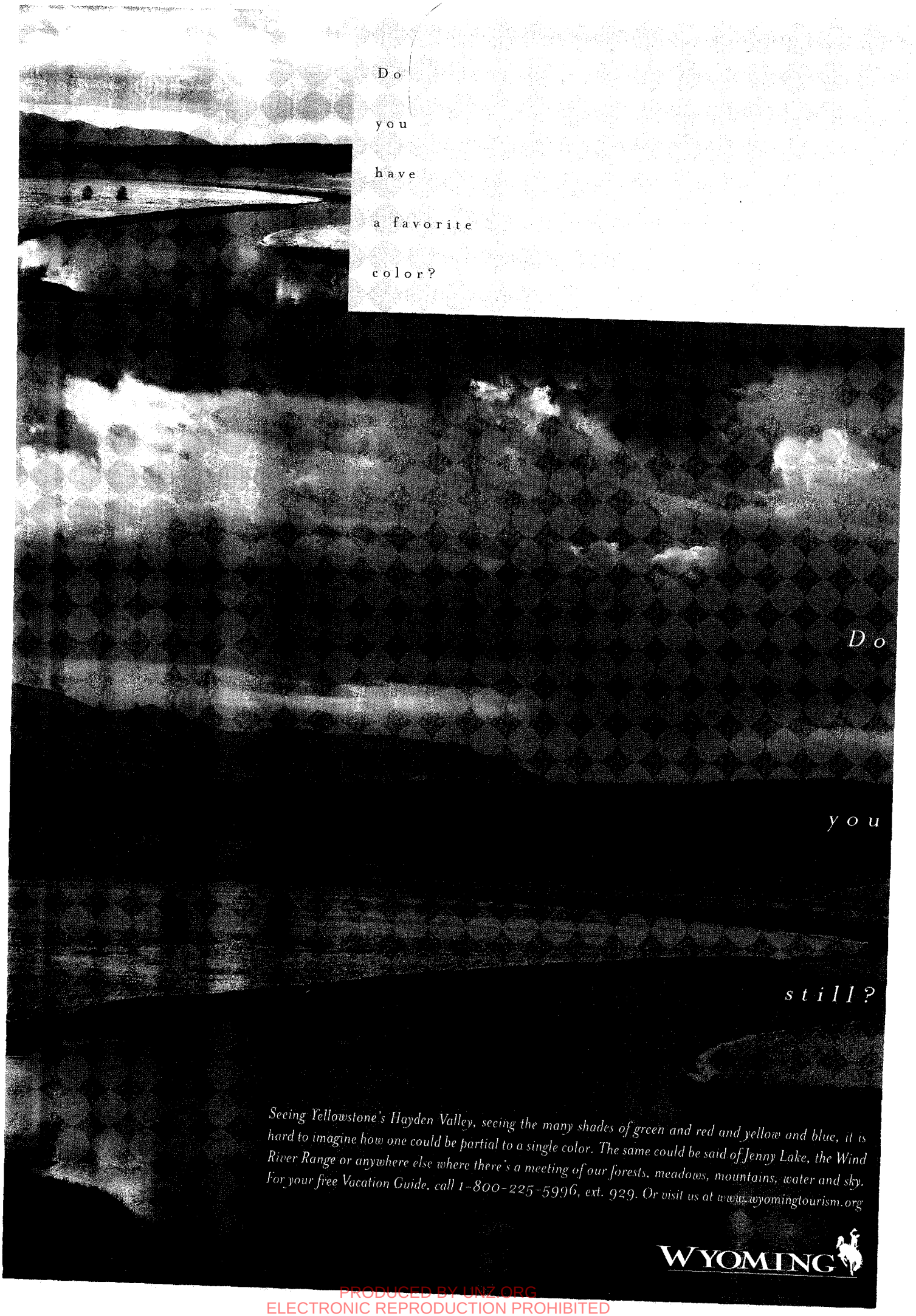

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public's enthusiasm for a new one, even one of its own making.

Ignorance played a role as well. Because the vast majority of Welsh people get their news from the London-based media, which covered the Assembly debate scantily at best, they were flummoxed by the choice before them and prey to bizarre rumors. Richard Wyn Jones, a political scientist at the University of Wales, reported that a third of the voters in one district believed that if devolution was successful, travelers would have to carry passports between England and Wales. Other factors included Wales's centuries-old sense of inferiority, and an abiding impulse toward imperial unity—the flip side of Welsh nationalism. If Hitler couldn't break the United Kingdom fifty years ago, the argument went, why should we do it ourselves now?

Are the Welsh afraid of freedom? Even they cite national timidity and a lack of self-confidence.

After the votes were counted, the yeses and nos seemed at first to follow the lines of the language debate: with one exception the twelve counties of Welsh-speaking western Wales and the old mining valleys of the south—worldwide icons of Welshness, thanks to *How Green Was My Valley*, even if today they are primarily English-speaking—voted for the Assembly, and the ten traditionally English-speaking eastern counties voted against it. Electoral maps showed Wales virtually split down the center. But this image was skewed, because counties were designated in favor of or against devolution based on a simple majority of votes, even if the results in many counties were extremely close. A full 40 percent of the yes votes were actually cast in the eastern counties, which are far more densely populated. Feelings pro or con seemed to derive more clearly from generational and economic differences. Older people tended to have more at stake in maintaining a British self-image than voters who came of age during the campaign for the Welsh language, when the idea of a distinct nation called Wales had begun to take hold. Members of the middle classes had fared pretty well under the Conservatives, and had no ax to grind; working-class voters, however, especially those from the valleys devastated by the miners' strike of 1984–1985, felt so poorly treated by the British government that they could see nothing to be lost by bringing legislators closer to home.

EVEN if it was not a decisive issue, language did cast many shadows both before and after the referendum. Although it would seem that a self-ruling Wales would be the best guardian of its own tongue, Welsh has flourished over the past two decades under the British government. Public funding for Welsh-language television, for instance, far outweighs that for English-language programming in Wales. If the Assembly assumed control of Welsh TV, activists had to ask themselves before voting, could English-speaking Assembly members—whose constituents will sorely need funding for jobs and social programs—afford to be as generous as London politicians? (The concern is now moot: after the referendum Parliament decided to keep media funding under its own auspices.) Did activists remember the warning of the Welsh writer and Plaid Cymru founder Saunders Lewis, who said that if Wales should gain political autonomy before its language was secure, its language would be lost? Did they vote for the nation and cross their fingers?

Now the National Assembly for Wales is no longer a phantom possibility but instead is set to occupy a handful of buildings on the Cardiff harborfront. "Devolution is a process, not an event," Ron Davies, the former secretary of state for Wales, was often quoted as saying. With the vote over, the task before Wales lies in attempting to follow his example as a hybrid Welshman—an English-speaker who has learned Cymraeg and wholeheartedly embraces the Assembly. Until now the British government has served as a buffer between Wales's cultural and economic interest groups. What will happen when the groups are thrown together? Will the Assembly become what Rachel Lomax, the former Welsh Office permanent secretary (now the permanent secretary of the department of social security), has called "a forum in which we can at last talk to each other"? Or will it disintegrate into what many voters feared: a Babel of factions arguing fruitlessly at taxpayer expense? Either way, the talk and all debate will be fully bilingual.

About 1,500 years ago native Britons lost what is now England to invading Anglo-Saxons, who called them "Welsh," which can be translated as "Romanized foreigners." Now, after all these years as outsiders on their own island, the Welsh finally do possess something: an opportunity.

Scotland's Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales will be the first democratically elected regional bodies to serve the distinct nations of the British Isles. As such, they may not only touch off far-reaching constitutional changes (there's talk of regional assemblies for England as well) but also help to normalize the institution of an Assembly in the political quagmire that is Northern Ireland. Plans for the National Assembly include gender parity among members—difficult in a patriarchal country like Wales—and an unusual election strategy by which forty of the Assembly's sixty members will be elected by a simple majority of votes, whereas the remaining twenty will be appointed according to proportional representation, ensuring a place at the table for all major parties.

No one—in private, at any rate—believes that the Assembly will have powers sufficient to run Wales properly. Plaid Cymru is already calling for a Scottish-style Parliament, and that may very well come one day. In the meantime, sixty politicians will soon take their places in Cardiff, and in so doing will define themselves and their constituents as self-governing citizens of Wales and not merely subjects of the Crown. For the first time Wales is in the vanguard, with an arena of its own in which the Welsh people can opt to heal or to worsen their differences. The late Welsh poet Harri Webb once said, "Wales is walking backwards into independence." Maybe the Welsh will turn around and stride forward.

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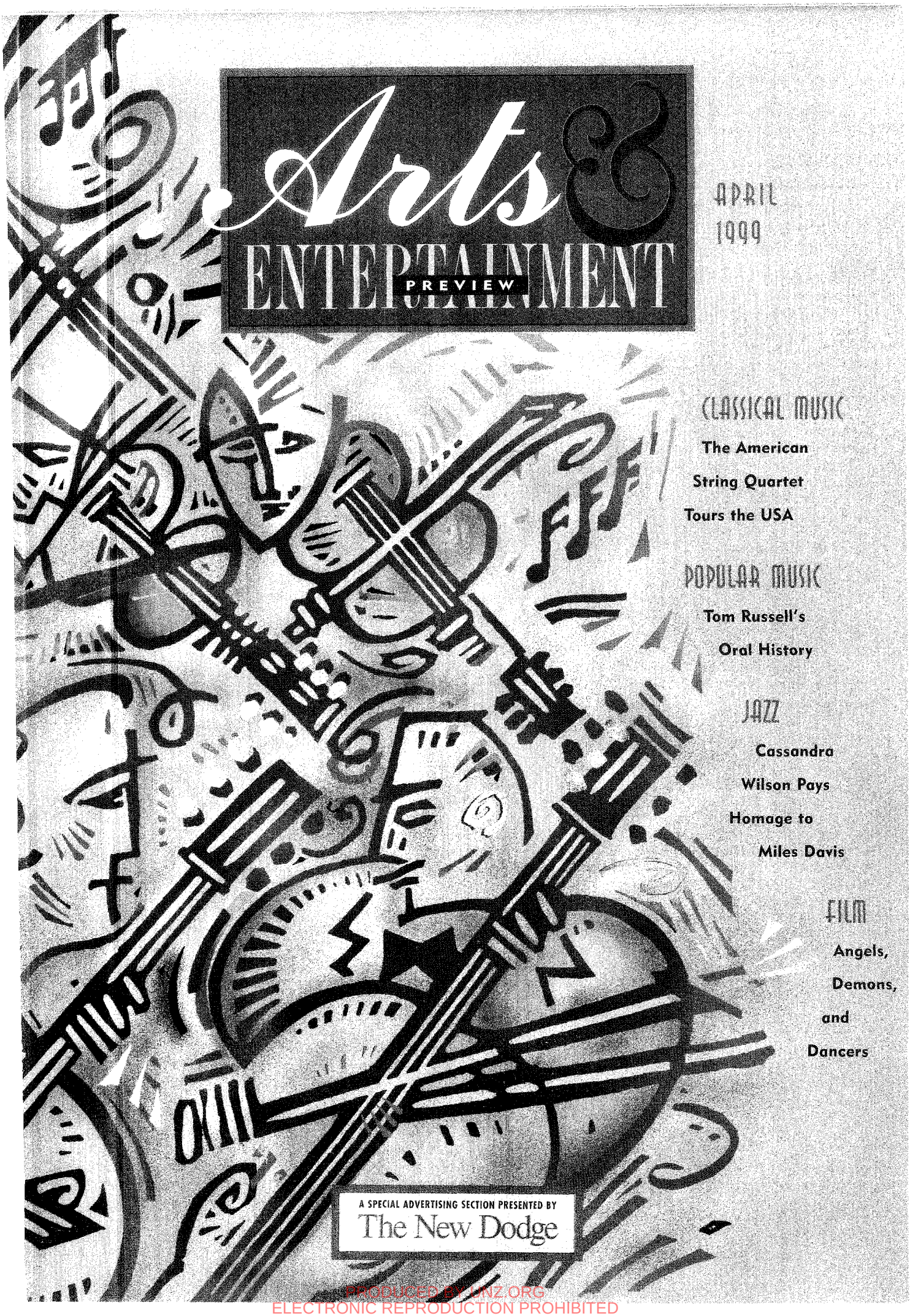
Arts & Entertainment

PREVIEW

APRIL 1999



CLASSICAL MUSIC

The American String Quartet Tours the USA

POPULAR MUSIC

Tom Russell's Oral History

JAZZ

Cassandra Wilson Pays Homage to Miles Davis

FILM

Angels, Demons, and Dancers

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Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

HOCUS-POCUS, OR THE MAGUS

As perhaps befits an adept of the paranormal, Ian Bostridge—author of *Witchcraft and Its Transformations, c.1650–c.1750* (Oxford Universty Press)—is himself the object of rather a cult. Wraithlike in appearance, possessed of a honeyed, strangely androgynous timbre and hypersensitive interpretive instincts, the precocious British tenor has at a stroke transformed the entire U.K. music press into his adoring coven. After a recent Manhattan recital Paul Griffiths, an expat at *The New York Times,* filed a review so delirious that months later readers were still reeling. A paraphrase might go like this: Bostridge wasn't so much interpreting the material as channeling. Witnessing the experience was so intense that a reader could not hope to recapture it. Those who missed the recital were advised to listen to Bostridge's CD of the material, but once only! Then, we were told, pass it on, and treasure the memory. The CD in question, on EMI Classics, was an all-Schumann disc including the famous cycle *Dichterliebe (A Poet's Love),* which indeed quivers too close to the nerve ends for frequent consumption. Happily, Bostridge has plenty of other numbers in his bag of tricks, so his spells may be savored once more. These days he is lending himself body and soul to the white magic of Franz Schubert and the abstruse supersubtleties of Hugo Wolf. His current tour began in March at the University of Richmond and with the Vocal Arts Society in Washington, D.C. This month he works his wiles at Union College, in Schenectady; at Spivey Hall, in Atlanta; at New York's Lincoln Center; in Philadelphia; and in Toronto. See local listings, and say a prayer.

Ian Bostridge

LUCY FITTER

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

String quartets take time to mature, though their promise may declare itself early. The American String Quartet advanced to the majors in 1974, winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award. This season Peter Winograd and Laurie Carney (violin), Daniel Avshalomov (viola), and David Geber (cello) celebrate their first quarter century with a tour of all fifty states of the Union. Travelwise, April is not their cruelest month, but for frequent-flyer miles it will be hard to beat. Two dates in Hawaii (Honolulu, April 10; Pahala, April 11) precede appearances at the University of New Orleans (April 16) and with the Chamber Music Society of Charleston, West Virginia (April 17). Alaska is on the itinerary next month (Juneau, May 22–26), with the grand finale scheduled for Aspen in August. As a further remembrance of this milestone season the ASQ has released, on six MusicMaster Classics CDs, the complete string quartets of Mozart, a set that bears eloquent witness to the partners' dynamic sense of balance and deep unanimity of purpose. Their four road programs are mixed, deliberately so. As Avshalomov remarks, "The way the music fits together makes as much of a statement about who we are as the way we put bow to string." The recitals combine international staples from Haydn to Bartók with the native voices of the iconoclastic Charles Ives and our unapologetically eclectic contemporary Richard Danielpour. This is as it should be: at its best, this country's musical culture is the whole world's, plus our own.

Avshalomov, Carney, Winograd, and Geber (from left)

DON HUNSTEIN

BUILDING BLOCKS OF AIR

Among serious musicians bent on pushing the envelope, Sofia Gubaidulina is a name uttered with reverence. Born in the Soviet Union in 1931, the composer has progressed from traditional tonality through serialism (the orthodoxy of our first half century's moderns) into regions where none precede her. Especially noteworthy is her use of timbre as a structural principle: a sort of second-order abstraction within the first-order abstraction that is music. This month Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic introduce Gubaidulina's latest: Concerto for Two Violas, a commission underwritten by a gift from Tomoko Masur, the maestro's wife, herself a former violist. The eccentric instrumentation—does any other double concerto for violas come to mind?—arises in recognition of a pair of singularly well-matched star-caliber soloists within the ranks of the orchestra: Cynthia Phelps, principal viola, and Rebecca Young, associate principal, coequals on this occasion. Under most circumstances the viola is a recessive instrument, pouring its soulful tone discreetly into the broad blend of the strings. Given Gubaidulina's exceptional response to the functional potential of sheer sound, the new concerto could prove one of her most illuminating experiments. (April 29 and 30, May 4; 212-721-6500. The April 29 premiere will be carried live or tape-delayed by 236 radio stations nationwide.)

Phelps, Masur, and Young

CHRIS LEE

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KRIS WILTSE

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Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

SONGS OF OURSELVES

Unlike standard-issue academic historians, folk musicians have always understood that the lives of common people yield at least as much drama as the great works of great men. On *The Man From God Knows Where* (HighTone), Tom Russell takes on the vast topic of immigration to America with a special emphasis on Ireland and Norway, where his own ancestors came from. The result is a historically conscious cycle of twenty-six songs that summon the spirit of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States: 1492–Present.* Russell's warm baritone resonates with sincerity, and he surrounds himself with highly distinctive guest musicians who keep his archetypes alive as characters rather than stereotypes (the bane of modern folk). Dave Von Ronk contributes his astounding rasp in the role of the "outcaste" who arrived in America and went "a touch insane." Annbjørg Lien lends her eerie hardanger fiddle and key harp to the story of a Norwegian immigrant who lost his crops and ultimately turned to whiskey, both distilling and drinking. And Iris DeMent sings a devastating "Wayfarin' Stranger." But most of the credit goes to Russell, whose reach is both wide and deep, balancing the grand sweep of history with the individual tragedies of his ancestors broken on the frontier. He closes with a particularly moving portrait of his alcoholic father, broken by the dream of striking it rich. "How can you be a loser if you never lose your pride?" he asks about his father—but the question applies to most of the outcasts who never quite found their dream in America. **—C.M.Y.**

DAVID BURCKHALTER

Tom Russell

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe. *Charles M. Young reviews popular music for* Playboy, Musician, *and other publications.*

GOING THE EXTRA MILES

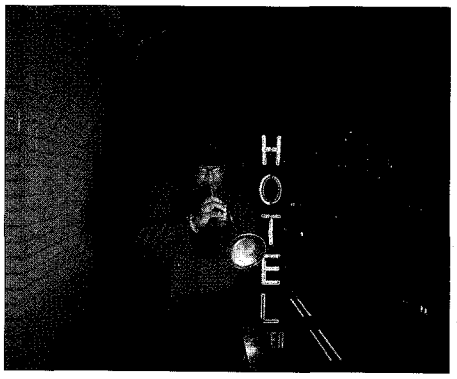
Cassandra Wilson has something different in mind with *Traveling Miles* (Blue Note), her tribute to Miles Davis. Amid seven compositions associated with the late trumpeter she includes four of her originals, and the settings avoid both the horns-and-rhythm punch of Davis's acoustic quintets and the electric edge of his fusion years in favor of such decidedly non-Milesian touches as marimba, Greek bazouki, violin, mandolin, and harmonica. The atmosphere is of a piece with Wilson's recent albums, on which catholic tune choices and hypnotic arrangements transformed jazz's most promising vocalist into a singular crossover success. The results here are equally captivating. Wilson attacks the familiar songs from inspired angles—putting a bitonal, 4/4 spin on the waltz "Someday My Prince Will Come" that drains the song's innocence while retaining its wonder; bringing the heraldic "Tutu" (retitled "Resurrection Blues") closer to rural sources with a dash of bottleneck guitar—and makes oblique yet telling use of Mileslike moods for her own "When the Sun Goes Down" and "Piper." A few famous guests, including Pat Metheny and Angelique Kidjo, do effective cameo turns. Equally impressive are such emerging jazz stars as the mallet players Stefon Harris and Cecilia Smith and the violinist Regina Carter. Wilson's voice is the glue, with an aura both vulnerable and ominous, like the sound of the Harmon-muted Miles Davis horn. **—B.B.**

JOANNE SAVIO

Cassandra Wilson

THE SOUNDS BEHIND THE SCENES

At its most inspired, the use of jazz in movie soundtracks finds one twentieth-century art form feeding another, expanding dramatic possibilities and lending the complex emotional nuances that contemporary storytelling demands. The trumpeter Terence Blanchard is the most active composer of jazz scores, having collaborated frequently with Spike Lee; but his new CD *Jazz in Film* (Sony Classical) is less a personal celebration than a summary of how Elmer Bernstein, Bernard Herrmann, and other Oscar-winning composers have applied swing and the blues. Blanchard has reduced cinema music to combo scale in the past, most impressively on *The Malcolm X Jazz Suite* (Columbia), a few years back. Here he adopts a concerto grosso format, placing bands of four to seven pieces within orchestral settings that retain the big-screen majesty of the original scores. The soloists respond well, with the tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson and the late pianist Kenny Kirkland making several effective contributions, while Blanchard's playing is filled with the quixotic shifts and teasing smears that he and his New Orleans contemporary Wynton Marsalis have turned into a neoclassical trumpet style. The real stars of *Jazz in Film,* though, are the composers. Hearing Jerry Goldsmith's "Chinatown" and Quincy Jones's "The Pawnbroker" (the album's most striking melodies) transports the listener to a darkened theater and raises images of the movies they so indelibly embellished. **—B.B.**



JOSEPH PLUCHINO

Terence Blanchard

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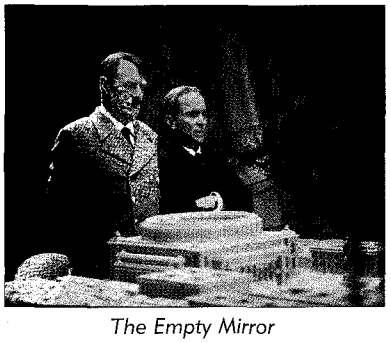
Fiction

BY ELLA TAYLOR

EVIL LOOKS

Like all deluded people who prize action and emotion above reflection, Adolf Hitler seems never to have entertained doubt about anything, let alone his blueprint for world mastery. Barry Hershey's ambitious, fascinating feature debut, *The Empty Mirror*, imagines the dictator incarcerated after the Second World War and forced to contemplate his horrible life's work. Played by British actor Norman Rodway with a blackly comic balance of bombast and dementia, Hitler obsesses over newsreels



The Empty Mirror

JOHN PASCHAL

and Nazi propaganda films, takes meetings with the likes of Freud (Peter Michael Goetz) and Eva Braun (the radiant Danish actress Camilla Soeberg), pouts at the fact that Roosevelt was *Time* magazine's Man of the Year more often than he was, and trashes every recipe for mystifying the masses that isn't his. ("Compared to you," says his diminutive yes-man Goebbels, wittily played by Joel Grey, "Wagner was a minimalist.") Though the dialogue, written by Hershey and R. Buckingham, is bracing ("The Jews take their removal so personally," muses the Fuhrer), when every utterance is a topic sentence, the cumulative effect can be wearing. What saves this two-hour movie from sagging is its inventive use of effects—in particular the poetic ingenuity of Frederick Elmes (cinematographer to David Lynch and Jim Jarmusch), who integrates Nazi film footage (notably Hitler apologist Leni Riefenstahl's masterpiece, *Triumph of the Will*) into the dictator's mad soliloquies. Hershey's thesis is that confronted with the enormity of his crimes and the failure of his plans, Hitler must surely have come undone. I hope he's right.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.

QUIET INSIGHTS

There's a lazy shorthand often used in movies about young people, which reduces their lives to pop caricature—heavy metal on the soundtrack, torrents of teen argot, bags of frenetic action. Not so in Erick Zonca's first feature: even the shocks are quiet in *The Dreamlife of Angels*, a delicately observed chamber piece about two French street kids trying to make their way in the world. Itinerant odd-jobber Isa (Elodie Bouchez, last seen in André Téchiné's *Wild Reeds*) lands in Lille and finds friendship with Marie (Natacha Régnier), who is house-sitting an apartment while the owner and her daughter languish in hospital following a car crash. Though the girls are very different, they forge a life together, finding work and hanging out with two amiable local lugs. But the vulnerable, paranoid Marie's affair with a caddish rich boy (Grégoire Colin) tests both her fragile internal equilibrium and her friendship with the loyal Isa, who meanwhile treks faithfully to the hospital to reach out to a comatose stranger. Opting for a bald, naturalistic style, Zonca uses almost no incidental music to prompt our responses. Instead he allows his camera to do the emotional work, tracking the faces of the girls in slow, meditative takes as they react to the trouble around and within them. Bouchez and Régnier richly deserve the Best Actress award they shared at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

Elodie Bouchez as Isa

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

There's more ballet than bio in *Dancemaker*, Matthew Diamond's profile of legendary New York choreographer Paul Taylor. Just as well, perhaps, because Taylor takes a dismissively dim view of his lonely childhood with midwestern farmers who, he claims, were paid to love him. Not that Taylor's character is without interest. Like many artists, this former disciple of Martha Graham is propelled by "a fear of failure," which may explain his relentless driving of his dancers, in whom he inspires the ambivalent extremes of loyalty, terror, and resentment that typically run between a master and his slaves. A former choreographer, Diamond has a purist's eye, bringing Taylor's fascination with "ordinary movement" to the screen with simple austerity. Cutting between footage of the massively built Taylor dancing *Aureole* ("like water," says dance critic Deborah Jowitt) for Martha Graham, in 1962, and Taylor today as he struggles to perfect a new dance, Diamond also conducts backstage interviews with past and present members, and follows the company as it tours India and returns to a Broadway season threatened by strikes. Though it lacks the easy charm and warm affection of *Unzipped*, Douglas Keeve's comparable backstage documentary about the more immediately likable fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, *Dancemaker* is a coolly elegant study of an artist through his art.

Paul Taylor Dancers

HOWARD SCHATZ

The New Dodge

Its name now synonymous with disaster, the *Titanic* has guarded its secrets despite relentless scrutiny—until now. Join Discovery Channel filmmakers, historians, and marine architects for *Titanic: Answers From the Abyss*, a moment-by-moment re-creation of the ship's final hours (Sunday, April 25 at 8:00 P.M. EST). The New Dodge is proud to sponsor this Discovery Channel world premiere and this month's Arts & Entertainment Preview.

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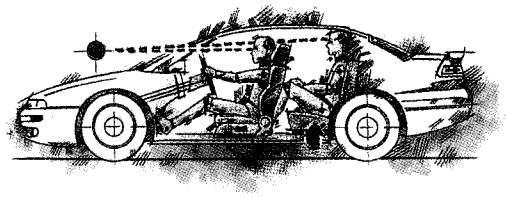

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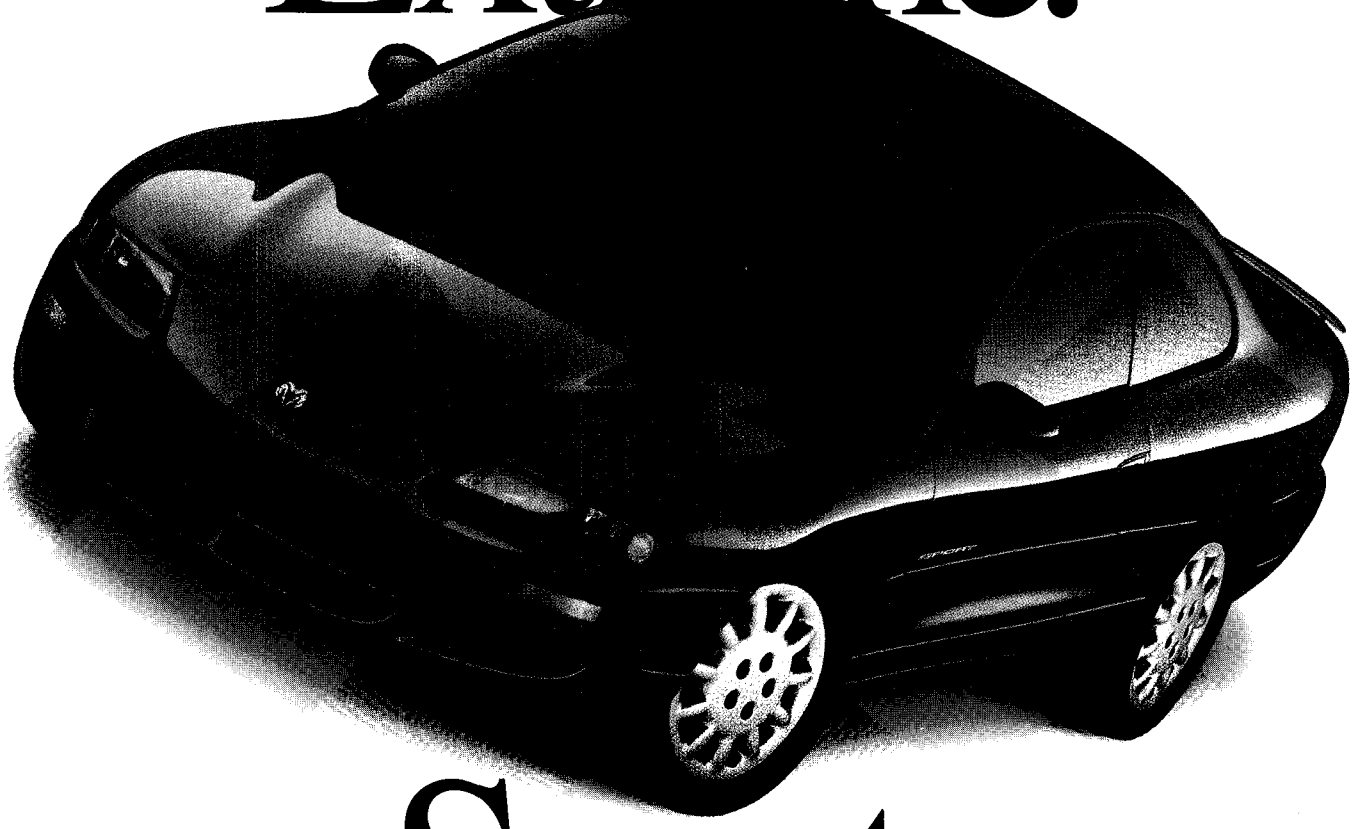

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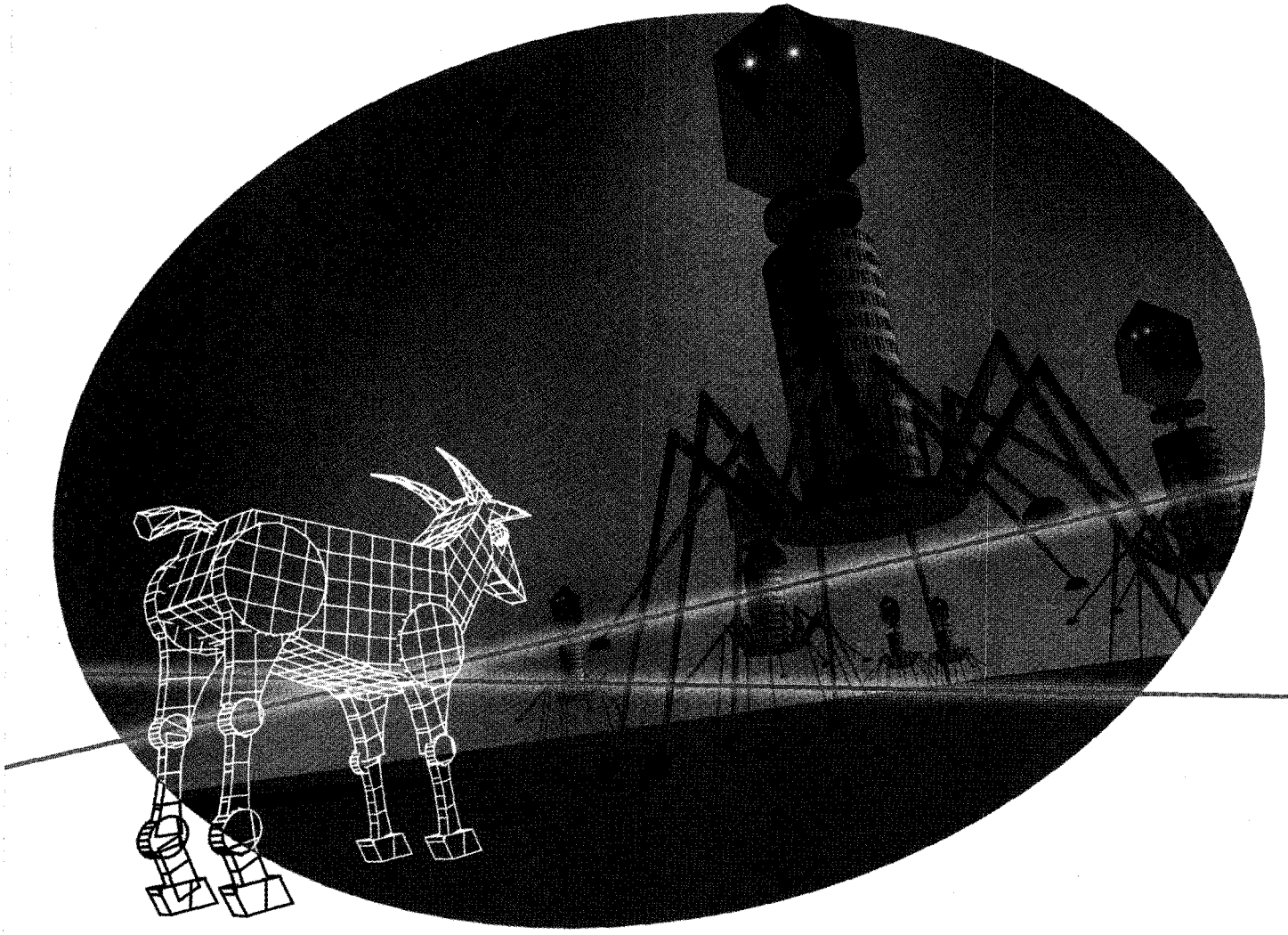

The Virus Wars

Guided by an inspired analogy with the human immune system, IBM scientists have developed the next generation of defenses against computer bugs

by Robert Buderi

IN December of 1987 an electronic message named "CHRISTMA EXEC" arrived at IBM's flagship Thomas J. Watson Research Laboratory, in Yorktown Heights, New York. Steve R. White, a theoretical physicist, was working on an unrelated computer-security problem when the communiqué first unfolded on a colleague's screen, slowly tapping out keyboard characters in the shape of a pine tree and then signing off with the salutation "Merry Christmas."

Any enchantment, though, turned to worry as the visitor accessed the colleague's electronic address book and sent a copy of itself—ostensibly from the colleague—to the 1,500 or so entries in the database. A magician doing a disappearing act, CHRISTMA EXEC then erased itself. People were stunned. Loudspeakers blared a warning not to run the rogue program, but it was too late. The holiday message was a Scroogelike virus that replicated itself hundreds of thousands of times, clogging up the company's internal E-mail system for nearly a day. Long before all the damage reports were in, however, White had dropped what he was doing to concentrate on the invader. "You realize as soon as this happens that it's something bad," he recalls. "I said, 'That's it, I'm not working today. I'm going to watch this happen, because this is a seminal event in history.'"

This was an early battle in the Virus Wars, a struggle between good and evil that affects a million computer users every year and threatens to intensify in the age of Internet communications and commerce, when viruses can be passed rapidly around the globe. With huge bets placed on the future of E-business, and

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with virtually every virus aimed at IBM computers and compatibles (such machines running Microsoft's DOS and Windows operating systems today account for some 90 percent of all personal computers), few companies take the threat as seriously as IBM does. In 1987 perhaps three digital viruses existed. Today, every day, six to ten PC viruses stream into the Anti-Virus Center at IBM's Hawthorne Laboratory, an extension of the Watson lab a few miles down the road from its parent. So far the IBM group has battled about 20,000 separate invaders.

And that's not even the half of it. Until recently the enemy at least seemed contained: once IBM's investigators or their counterparts in a few other organizations turn their attention to a virus, it typically takes less than twenty-four hours to decipher the code and divine a cure. But with millions of people swapping files and conducting Internet business around the clock, once-sluggish mutant codes can go global in well under a day.

On a recent visit to the Hawthorne Lab, White took me to a two-room suite a couple of floors above the Anti-Virus Center. Here, sealed off from the outside world by computer firewalls and other defenses against hackers, resides a prototype of what IBM thinks might be the savior of the Net. It's called the Digital Immune System. The idea is to create digital white blood cells—much as human beings develop antibodies to biological agents—that will be permanently available on line. In theory, automatic virus-scouting programs will transmit suspect codes directly to the immune center, where they will be analyzed and debugged and the cure beamed back before mere mortals even know there's a problem. "If the Internet is going to survive," White says, "we're going to need an automated response on this rapid time scale."

With millions of people swapping files around the clock, mutant codes can go global in well under a day.

A COMPUTER virus is a bit of software code that gets into a machine—typically through a disk or an electronic message—and co-opts its host's resources, making copies of itself and ordering up aberrant behavior ranging from posting an innocuous message to wiping out hard drives. Although the theory behind viruses goes back at least to the 1970s, they did not emerge in the "wild" until the late 1980s. They speedily became an everyday menace. Annual sales of anti-virus software are expected to surpass $1 billion next year.

Nearly as soon as viruses came into existence, myths emerged about virus writers. In TV shows and movies they are brilliant iconoclasts who run circles around hapless corporations. No such romanticism affects IBM's twenty-five-person anti-virus team, however. Viral codes are rife with bugs—and none of their writers would land a job with IBM. "The writers might think that they're showing off their programming prowess," says Jeffrey O. Kephart, an instrumental figure in IBM's anti-virus fight. "But in most cases they're displaying their ineptitude to the world." Though few good studies of virus writers exist, the available evidence indicates that they're almost always male, usually in their teens or early twenties, and have an attitude. A pair of file cabinets inside the Anti-Virus Center hold boxes of diskettes bearing copies of every virus the lab has tackled. A few samples from this morgue illustrate the point.

One is Wazzu, which in its heyday, in 1997, infected Microsoft Word files by randomly shuffling words and inserting its name into text, as in "Now is wazzu the country to come to the aid of your time." Form, another demon, caused keyboards to make an annoying clicking sound on the twenty-fourth of each month. Inside his errant code, where only debuggers would see it, Form's creator left this message: "Virus sends greetings to everyone who's reading this text. Form doesn't destroy data! don't panic. F---ings go to corinne."

These creations may seem like harmless pranks, but anti-virus researchers warn that there's no such thing as a benign virus. Take Wazzu. "You might think it's a funny virus unless you're writing the Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty," White says. Even Form is far from harmless, since a virus's very presence means that a computer's standard operations have been disrupted, increasing the risk of crashes and tainted files. And without naming names, White tells horror stories of corporate mergers in which one company infected another because viruses got into the spreadsheets they exchanged.

Which explains why IBM opened the Anti-Virus Center in early 1989, barely a year after CHRISTMA EXEC hit. Working initially with IBM corporate customers, and later expanding into the consumer sector with its IBM AntiVirus software package, the center's team has not only assembled a collection of viruses but also classified each according to what it attacks—files, the operating system, and so forth—and tracked its incidence rate. Setting the stage for the coming showdown in cyberspace, White identifies five epochs in the war against viruses.

Cambrian Explosion (1982–1988). The real Cambrian Period saw an explosion of multicellular invertebrate life. Viruses are not quite the same but close enough. By the mid-1980s the personal computer had evolved from an oddity into a productive tool—and long-theorized viruses became a reality. Toward the end of the period CHRISTMA EXEC arrived at IBM.

Age of Dinosaurs (1988–1992). Invertebrates were joined by great beasts. Some were file infectors, so named because they infected individual files, or applications. An early arrival was the Jerusalem virus, which on every Friday the thirteenth put black rectangles on screens and erased any files executed that day. A programming error allowed the virus to invade files multiple times, adding 1,813 bytes of data with every re-infection: programs infected repeatedly would no longer fit in memory.

Around the same time, boot infectors arose. They were activated when users started up, or "booted," their computers with a floppy diskette. From 1990 to 1992 the Stoned virus was the world's most prevalent. The only consequence of the virus was that one out of every eight times a user booted up from a floppy disk, it flashed the message "Your PC is now Stoned!"

Asteroids Hit Earth (1992–1995). File

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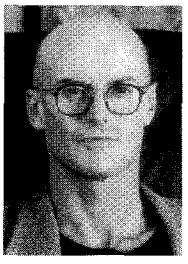

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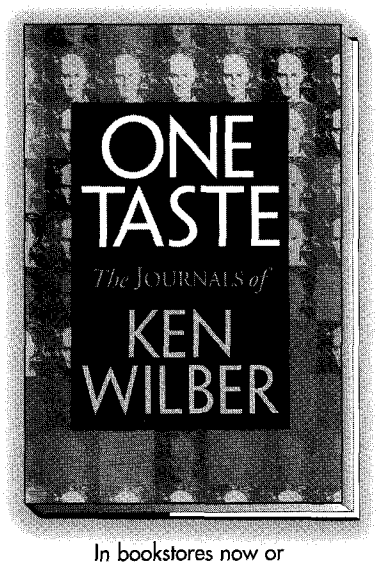

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infectors were the first casualty. Their decline coincided with Microsoft's segue out of DOS and the growing popularity of its Windows 3.1 operating system, which wouldn't work with infected files. Thus the file infectors' environment was made unlivable, just as asteroids or comets striking Earth may have made it unlivable for the dinosaurs.

Boot infectors, however, co-existed perfectly with Windows. Early in 1992 viruses were elevated to national prominence by the discovery of Michelangelo, set to be activated on March 6—the artist's birthday. The widely publicized virus—even *Nightline* did a segment on it—raised the specter of computer Armageddon, because it promised to erase hard disks on a specific day. Lines ran around the block outside some stores selling anti-virus software.

Michelangelo proved largely a dud. Anxious scanning of disks for signs of the virus turned up scores of other boot infectors—but these viruses mounted a comeback that lasted nearly three years. Then Windows 95 had its debut. Thanks to a design quirk, it refused to spread boot viruses—making the environment uninhabitable for these agents, much as Windows 3.1 had for the file infectors. Boot infectors, too, went the way of the dinosaurs.

Mammals on the Rise (1995–1999). A new predator evolved: the macro virus. Far more nimble than the file- and bootosaurs, it hid inside "macros," the little programs inside Microsoft Word documents and Excel spreadsheets that busy themselves with formatting and other subtasks. These viruses, including Wazzu and contemporaries dubbed Npad and Paix, thrived with the widespread sharing of files by way of E-mail—where such exchanges take place far more readily than they do through disks. For the first time, the tools of executives were affected. A CEO might dash off an electronic memo to all employees and contaminate every computer in the company.

The first macro virus, Concept, arrived just as boot infectors suffered their mortal blow, late in 1995. Its one overt act was to put up a message box containing the number 1. A message in the macro code, at the spot that could have included instructions for more-damaging action, read, "This should be enough to show the concept."

The period 1996 through 1998 was a brief golden time for anti-virus forces. Even the stealthiest new beasts rarely lasted longer than twelve months. The telling factor seemed to be anti-virus software, as IBM and others grew increasingly adept at putting out timely updates, and people seemed more willing to use them.

Monster From the Cyber Lagoon (1999–?). But then the Internet blossomed. As long as viruses replicated chiefly through disk exchanges, it could take a year for one to spread around the world. That left plenty of time to install anti-virus updates. In the age of E-mail and macro viruses, infections could become global in a month—still a reasonable amount of time to fortify defenses. But now viruses can travel worldwide in twenty-four hours. "The compression of the time scales from a year to a month to a day changes everything," White says. "Basically, the way the anti-virus industry is trying to solve the problem right now just breaks down."

The idea is to create digital white blood cells—digital antibodies—to be permanently available online.

IN 1990, when the Anti-Virus Center was only a year old, White discussed the need to automate virus hunting with Jeffrey Kephart, who was then a newly arrived expert in nonlinear dynamics. This concern ultimately persuaded Kephart to join the Virus Wars.

"Patterns and connections have always thrilled me," Kephart told me recently. "For the past decade or so I've had lots of fun exploring analogies between large, decentralized computer systems and things like ecosystems, biological systems, and economies." Almost as soon as White started talking to him on that day nine years ago, the analogy bells started ringing for Kephart. He began musing about how human beings ward off biological bugs by building up antibodies, and wondering wheth-

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er a similar system could be contrived to fight digital viruses—especially ones that had yet to be seen.

The first step was to understand viruses better. The lab began compiling its elaborate database of attacks on IBM's corporate customers. Armed with the location and date of each incident, the number of infected PCs, and the type of virus involved, researchers employed techniques from mathematical epidemiology to figure out how viruses replicated and spread. In addition to watching for alterations in key parts of memory and other hallmarks of virus activity, most scanning programs today roam hard drives or disks looking for specific pieces of known viral code. These codes typically run a few dozen bytes in length. Drawing on pattern-matching techniques from computational biology, the IBM group was eventually able to spot known viruses from snippets as small as three to five bytes—speeding up detection. Identifying unknown agents was tougher. But the fact that a single signature often characterizes whole virus "families" proved crucial: since these set code patterns are directly linked to function, a wide variety of viruses could be recognized—and cured—even though they had never been seen before.

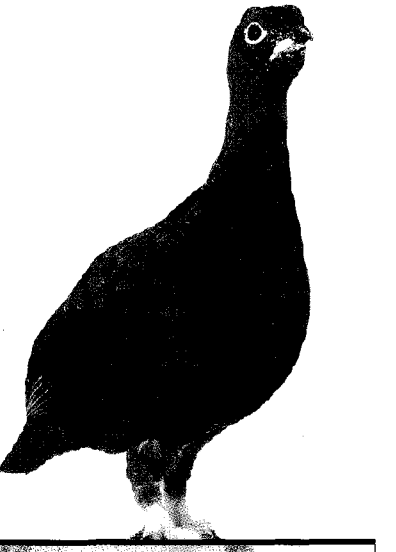
In the end, it took nine patents and seven years for what came to be called the Digital Immune System to materialize in the two-room suite at Hawthorne. The inner sanctum holds a series of computers and components stacked floor to ceiling. In the outer room, equipped with a large sofa, a kickboxing bag, and more computers, a small research group monitors the system and labors to perfect it.

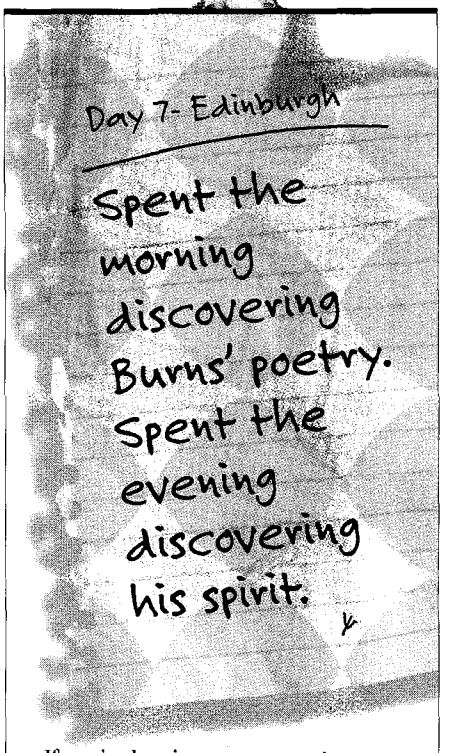
The basic concept is that anti-virus clients will be networked directly to the prototype's central computer. Monitoring programs on clients' PCs will beam a copy of any suspicious program to the system's analysis engine, which will make a quick guess as to what kind of virus might be arriving. From there the sample will be passed to what the team describes as a series of digital petri dishes—a separate collection of computers fitted with decoy, or "goat," programs that simulate the kinds of environments viruses like to invade. Goats can be run in different languages, and since certain dates—Friday the 13th, for example—might trigger certain viruses, it's even possible to rapidly simulate all the days of the year, and also different hours of each day. Because the starting condition of each goat is known, the system can track the exact path of any infection, determine the invader's traits, develop rules for removing the virus—and, with luck, undo any damage it has done. The immune system will then copy the virus and test its assumptions to make sure its cure works. The resulting "antibodies" will be transmitted back to the infected client and to any other machines on the network, and will become a permanent part of their memories. Eventually every customer will receive a copy through regular updates.

IBM publicly demonstrated the Digital Immune System in October of 1997, at the International Virus Bulletin Conference, a gathering of the world's top virus fighters and their customers, held that year in San Francisco. Kephart and a few colleagues brought a virus-plagued PC onstage, and the delighted audience watched as errant code was transmitted to Hawthorne, a cure derived, and the solution beamed back—in just over three minutes. Since then, field trials have been scheduled, with a commercial rollout planned for later this year. Last year the company announced a deal to give Symantec Corporation, the California-based maker of the market-leading Norton AntiVirus, rights to its anti-virus work—thereby fusing Norton's strong market position with IBM's technology.

Without an immune-system-like defense, White says, viruses threaten to "stop the forward progress of computing." But that's not to say he thinks the days of the computer virus are numbered. Even as the Digital Immune System was being readied for field trials, a renegade program for automating macro-virus production was circulating in the virus-writing community. It also appears that today's rapid-fire file exchanges, which often involve passing data among various applications, can cause viruses to mutate and take on properties more damaging than even their creators intended.

In short, just as there is no end to the human battle against biological bugs, the campaign against their digital counterparts endures. White says, "This is going to be a problem that stays with humanity as long as we use computers."





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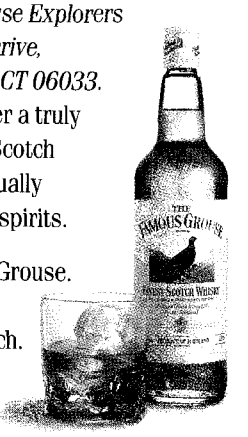

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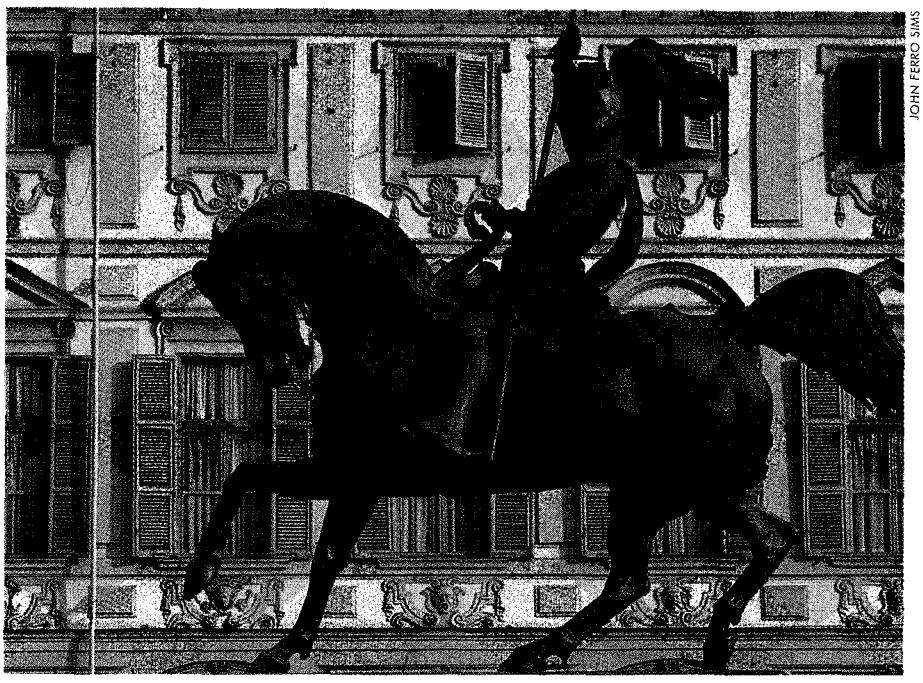

JOHN FERRO SIMS

Touring Turin

The place to experience the height of northern-Italian elegance isn't where most people think

by Corby Kummer

I'M always surprised when first-time or infrequent visitors to Italy tell me that they plan to spend a few days in Milan. Their idea, I think, is that Milan will offer the epitome of style, which along with art and food is one of the three pillars of Italian culture. This reminds me of the 1946 George Price cartoon of an aging flapper racing toward a news vendor and crying, "*Vogue*! And hurry!" True, Milan is the center of the country's fashion and media industries. But that doesn't mean the visitor can plug into them simply by walking down the streets or going into the right bars. Trendsetters generally keep behind closed doors, and the customers in the famed boutiques of Via Monte Napoleone are seldom Italian. Gray, vast, and monolithic, Milan is a city very hard to like—and nearly impossible to love.

Those hankering for northern elegance should know that Turin is no more than an hour and a half from both Milan's city center and its airport, Malpensa, which was recently designated one of Italy's principal international gateways (despite the fact that connections to and from Milan remain inconvenient). Every street in Turin offers at least one stylish shop and an unexpected Baroque or Art Nouveau vista; the museums are excellent and varied; shops, thanks to industrial money, have been able to maintain their ornate turn-of-the-century façades and interiors; the cafés are the most spectacular in a country blessed with a café on every block; the wine and cheese, from the surrounding hills and mountains of Piedmont, are among Italy's best (and often unavailable beyond the region's borders); and the pastry and chocolates are easily the country's most refined. Price's panicky flapper might not find the very latest frock. But in the luxurious, tasteful shops of Turin she would find clothes that designers actually wear.

I go to Turin as often as possible, and can't imagine tiring of it. Like Naples, my other favorite Italian city, Turin has lately been making itself dramatically more accessible, inviting, and navigable for tourists. The periodic viewings of the Shroud both jam the city (the two-month-long showing last spring, the first in twenty years, drew more than a million people) and set deadlines for renovation. The Royal Palace was repainted and cars were banned from much of the main piazza in time for last spring's onslaught, and the showing next year, in honor of the millennial, is likely to bring more renovation.

Yet even as it spruces up, Turin retains the intimacy and bustle of a pre-war city. On recent visits, when I would find that some Italian magazine had just highlighted the many improvements and called for yet more, I encountered very few tourists but many friendly natives. Turin has long been an insiders' secret. That may soon change.

WHEN people think of Turin, they usually think of cars: the *t* in the acronym "Fiat" is for "Torino." The Agnelli family, which controls the company, is Italy's modern-day royalty: Fiat owns the local newspaper and has a controlling interest in *Corriere della Sera*, the leading national daily; the family owns Juventus, a soccer team that is something of a national religion. Fiat's huge postwar expansion and its housing of southern-Italian emigrants in faceless suburbs enlarged the city, which in the seventies had to cope with the effects of helter-skelter growth and North-South culture clashes.

Turin is no Motor City, though. Fiat's presence is all but invisible in the center. Not even the Museum of the Automobile, one of the world's great collections of antique cars, housed in a big, airy 1960 International Style building

Above, Piazza San Carlo

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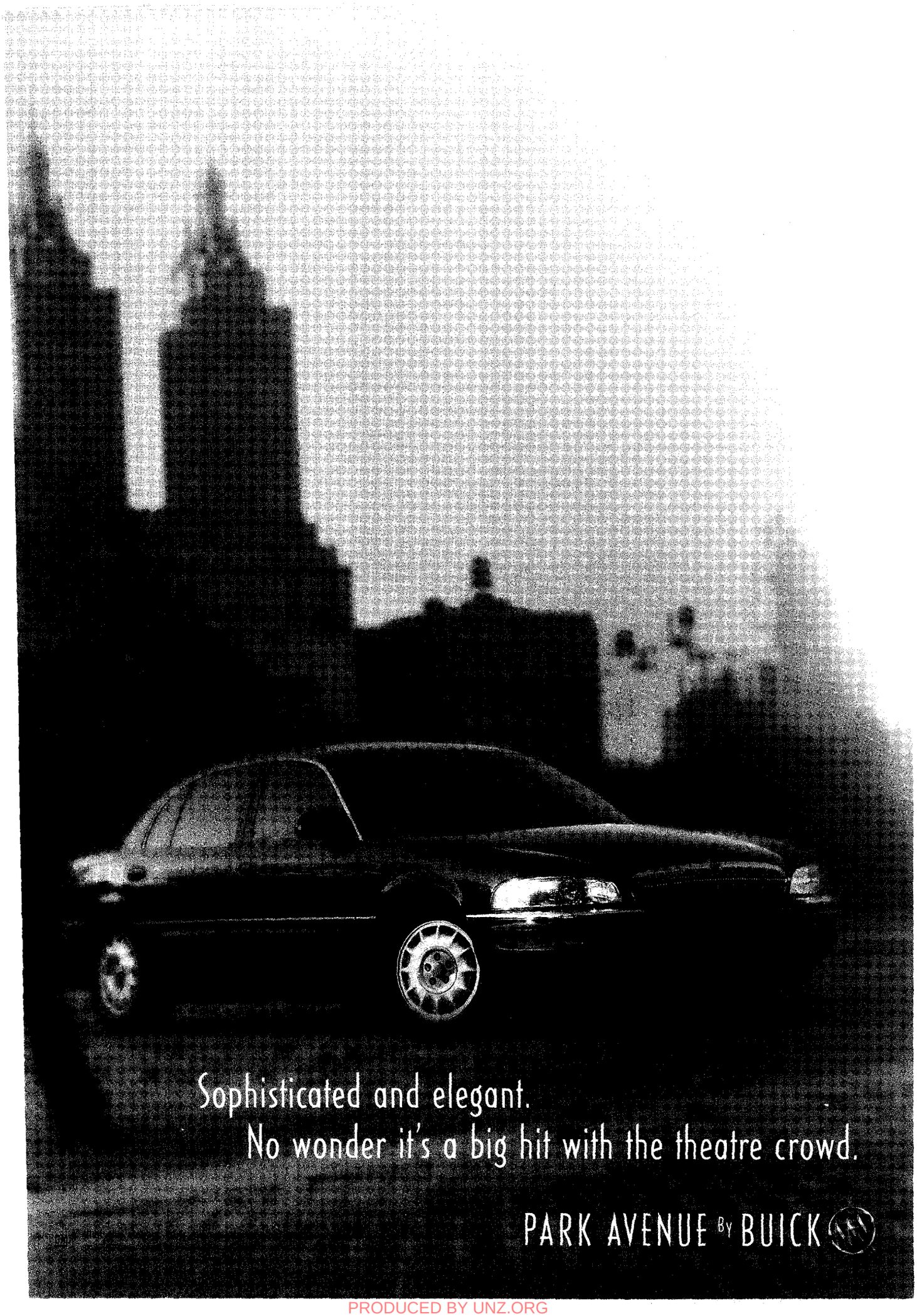

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facing the Po, is run by Fiat. Instead—and this is perhaps the greatest surprise to the visitor—the architecture of the city center is Baroque, and the prevailing feeling is not of heavy industry but of intellectual aristocracy. "I can't get over what a beautiful city this is," I heard again and again when I recently led colleagues on an informal tour.

Blood royalty, rather than industrial royalty, built the city. Turin was the seat of the House of Savoy, whose kings reigned, at least nominally, until 1946. One of them, the reform-minded Carlo Alberto, helped to stoke the revolutionary fervor that led to Italy's unification, in 1861, with Turin as the capital. (The capital was moved to Florence in 1865 and to Rome five years later.) The first Italian Parliament met in Turin's most beautiful building—the Palazzo Carignano, built in the late seventeenth century and the birthplace of Carlo Alberto.

Sightseeing should begin at the palazzo, which is within steps of the city's main museums and just blocks away from the best shops and nicest cafés. The palazzo is a Baroque marvel of undulating lines and red-brick ornament, including, unexpectedly, motifs taken from Native American feather headdresses (to commemorate Piedmontese participation in a French victory over the tribes of Quebec). Today it houses an absorbing museum of the unification of Italy—helpfully, many of the placards are in English—with excellent summaries of the country's wartime history. History comes alive across the way at the Ristorante del Cambio, an elaborately decorated restaurant where Count Camillo di Cavour, the architect of unification, held court and kept an eye on who was going in and out of Parliament. Perhaps he ate bollito misto, fragrant boiled meats sliced on a rolling silver cart, which is still the house specialty.

Once your eye is accustomed to seeing humble brick as a sinuous medium, you will note the similarly bold building catercorner from the palazzo, which houses Turin's two must-see museums—the Egyptian Museum and the Galleria Sabauda. The Sabauda boasts canvases by Italian and Flemish masters, including Fra Angelico, Mantegna, Bellini, and Van Eyck. Aside from the Shroud, the Egyptian Museum is Turin's chief tourist draw: any native will tell you, with somewhat hyperbolic enthusiasm, that after Cairo, Turin has the finest Egyptian collection in existence. Fascinating and rare as the painted sarcophagi and mummies and little kitchen tools may be, however, both labels and lighting are sparse except in one freshly installed basement gallery. (A plan under discussion would expand the Egyptian Museum into the space now occupied by the picture gallery upstairs; the paintings would move to the Royal Palace once its own restoration is completed.)

A walk in any direction from the Palazzo Carignano will reveal tree-lined avenues and boulevards, tranquil Baroque squares, arcaded streets (Turin has eleven miles of arcades), and Art Nouveau buildings that seem, like much of the city, to be more French than Italian: Piedmont was a French *département* for more than a decade under Napoleon. You might happen onto an eccentric museum, such as the Marionette Museum, or the long-shuttered Museum of Cinema—Turin was as important to the birth of Italian filmmaking as to the Italian automobile industry. The film museum is scheduled to reopen by the end of the year, in the very tall, very ugly Mole Antonelliana.

P. BALBONTIN/GRAZIA NERI

Galleria Subalpina, between the city's two main piazzas

Or you can keep your eye on shops: shops specializing in such old-fashioned items as fountain pens, metal and rubber stamps, tea by way of Paris (two sisters have opened an enchanting new boutique at Via della Rocca, 2), jewelry from the twenties through the seventies (Lorenzo and Paola Monticone run an extremely chic little shop at Via della Rocca, 4), Art Nouveau antiques (the sumptuous and very expensive Tina Biazzi gallery, at Via Maria Vittoria, 19), and British and British-influenced men's clothes (Jack Emerson, a big warehouselike shop where old-money Turin goes to watch its pennies, on the second floor of a modern building across from the Cambio restaurant). Each Saturday is the Balôn, a large flea market near the city's marvelous cast-iron-and-glass food markets; on the second Sunday of every month an expanded version, the Gran Balôn, draws dealers and customers from all over the region.

Piazza San Carlo, a few blocks from

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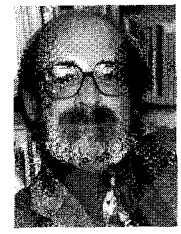

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the Palazzo Carignano, is usually called the drawing room of Turin, since so many Turinese pass through it several times a day. I like looking at the 1940s façade of the Lux Cinema, in a shopping gallery off the piazza, and I always stop at the Libreria Druetto, my favorite of the city's many bookstores, which has a good selection of guides and art books and a generous English-language section. Like many shops in Turin, it feels like a club. I was made a member on my first visit, when Elisabeth zu Stolberg, the tall, blonde, professorial co-owner, tested my rusty German on learning my surname. Each time I greet her, she makes me stumble through a few German pleasantries before she suggests which new books might be of interest.

A city stroll might continue down Via Roma, the arcaded main street for shopping and promenading, which was rebuilt by the Fascists in the 1930s, to Piazza Castello, the historic heart of Turin. At its center is the Palazzo Madama, a stark medieval castle on one side (hence the piazza's name) and a Baroque glass-fronted palace on the other. The piazza provides an introduction to the work of the two Turinese architects to watch for: Guarino Guarini, the designer of the Palazzo Carignano, and Filippo Juvarra, the designer of the windowed façade of the Palazzo Madama. Of the two, Guarini, a mathematician who flourished in the mid-1600s, was the more flamboyantly original: his work keeps the viewer off balance, wondering where light is entering and whether a dome could possibly be as tall as it seems. The plain Baroque façade of the San Lorenzo church, at one side of the vast piazza, gives no hint of Guarini's startling octagonal interior and dome behind it. Juvarra, who assumed the reins as royal architect fifty years later, took a more classical, monumental approach.

The contrast between the two architects is probably best shown by Guarini's surpassingly strange vertiginous, black-marble-lined Chapel of the Shroud, in the cathedral behind the piazza. You can't be disoriented by the chapel for a while: it burned two years ago in a fire that left the Shroud undamaged. Theoretically the chapel will reopen in time for next year's showing; the dates, and much else, should be available on the Turin tourist bureau's Web site, at www.turismotorino.org.

My passion for Turin may be largely explained by the constant opportunities to drink first-rate coffee (Italy's largest coffee roaster, Lavazza, is headquartered in the city) accompanied by first-rate sandwiches, pastry, and chocolate. Turin's most gorgeous cafés hide behind the arcades of Piazza Castello. Baratti & Milano joins two distinct architectural styles, somewhat like the Palazzo Madama; one is frothy Parisian Art Nouveau, and the other is the severe and fine-patterned Art Nouveau common in Jugendstil Vienna. Along the same arcade is the perfectly preserved Caffè Mulassano, with a small, cube-shaped interior from the early 1900s whose every surface is ornamented with colored marble or carved wood.

Turin's most charming café is Al Bicerin, a ten-minute walk from Piazza Castello and an essential stop for its definitive version of the eponymous drink, a mixture of chocolate, espresso, and creamy, very lightly foamed milk served in a low glass. The café has been in the hands of women since it opened, in the late eighteenth century (its simple, honey-colored wood interior dates back to the 1830s), and for many years was one of the few places women could appear alone in public; here they dunked long, wide ladyfingers into a *bicerin* to break the fast after mass at the Church of the Consolata, across the way. The cookies are still excellent. Today the café has become a hangout for the city's youth, who crowd out the door on Sunday afternoons.

The chicest café, appropriately, is on Via Roma: Zucca, whose interior is plain by comparison with Turin's Art Nouveau jewels but whose clientele more than makes up for it. The crowd is especially dense and well dressed at the aperitif hour, from roughly 6:30 to 8:30. Turinese cafés offer plate upon plate of savory tidbits with aperitifs, and the sandwiches at Zucca are the best in a city known for elegant sandwiches: don't miss the split focaccia slathered with fresh cream cheese and white-truffle paste. But then, I think everything is better at Zucca.

Many of the city's superb food shops have wood-and-etched-glass façades that look utterly Parisian, such as Steffanone, a premier gourmet shop, just off Piazza San Carlo; Paissa, which seems right out of the past century and sells wine and dry

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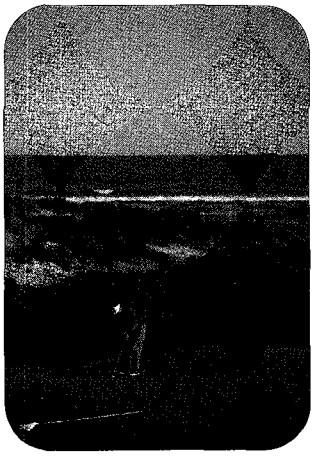

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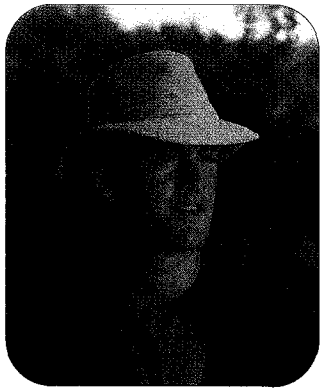

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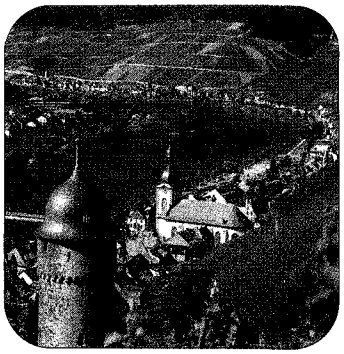

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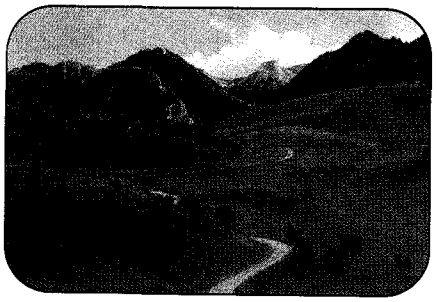

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goods at branches in Piazza San Carlo and Piazza Vittorio Veneto; and the beautiful cheese, pasta, and grissini (breadsticks, a city specialty) shops along Via San Tommaso, around the corner from the frescoed Art Nouveau arcades of Via Pietro Micca. The souvenir to bring home is a bag of gianduiotti, little ingots of chocolate and hazelnuts, which should be strong, not too sweet, and slightly gritty. The classic place to buy gianduiotti is Peyrano, long the city's reigning chocolatier, which roasts its own cocoa beans over olive wood; lately Peyrano has been getting some stiff competition from the artisan Guido Gobino, who roasts the famous local hazelnuts especially dark before grinding them into a paste. Pastry shops of note include Ghigo, in the arcaded Via Po, which bakes the city's best-loved panettone; I always take home a cellophane-wrapped package of soft, buttery ladyfingers (and often some homemade gianduiotti, too) from the Gertosio on Via Lagrange, the street that is considered Turin's gourmet row.

The choice of full-fledged restaurants isn't nearly as interesting or tempting as the choice of cafés, perhaps because people snack so frequently or perhaps because Turinese prefer to eat dinner at home. Piedmont is legendary for its rich and endless meals. Mercifully, few restaurants in Turin serve old-fashioned Piedmont haute cuisine: for that you must venture into the countryside, or go to nearby Alba, the truffle capital. I frequent the Montecarlo, a handsome, brightly lit, clubby place whose owner, Sante Prevarin, will devise a menu of typical but not excessive dishes, best built around the impeccable fish. Any meal should begin with tiny meat- or spinach-filled agnolotti made of fantastically delicate (because yolk-rich) pasta rolled by hand. Prevarin will bring out a selection of cheeses he claims are impossible to find elsewhere (ask for the herb-coated Maccagno, which he says "puts the hills into your mouth"), and for dessert there are addictive raisin- and pinenut-studded cookies rolled in, of all things, corn flakes.

Turin's hotels are functional, as befits a businesslike city, but several have something approaching charm. The Turin Palace, across from the Moorish train station, was once the luxurious empress of the city's hotels. It now has a 1960s feel despite its century-long history, and is still known for its service and well-heeled guests. I rely on the plush, snug Sitea, a central four-star businessman's hotel where the Juventus team stays, drawing crowds to cheer the athletes as they board big buses for matches. Nearby is the three-star Victoria, a charming small hotel set back from the street; friends have been very happy there, and also at the three-star Boston (whose location, in an elegant residential neighborhood behind the train station, is relatively inconvenient). I was impressed by a quick tour of the three-star Roma, in the piazza just across from the station. The rooms are large and, thanks to double-glazed windows, quiet, and the prices are very reasonable.

JOHN FERRO SIMS

Via Giovanni Giolitti, one of the axes leading to the River Po, at dusk

EVEN if you don't rent a car to explore the Piedmont in search of white truffles and Barolo, I recommend two minor excursions to see two Savoy residences; each is just a twenty- or thirty-minute taxi ride from the center. Castello di Rivoli is a severe, dramatically sited eighteenth-century brick castle in grand, sober Baroque, designed by Juvarra and renovated from 1979 to 1984 to house a decent collection of contemporary art. It's worth going for the ingeniously rebuilt interior and the commanding view of the city.

Stupinigi is a sort of dream: a hunting lodge built not long after Versailles, on a much smaller scale but nonetheless grand. In the unique plan devised by Juvarra, diagonal arms radiate outward from a spectacular central ballroom, whose painted walls, huge glass chandelier, and gilded crossbeams have been perfectly restored. But the royal suites around the ballroom have mostly not. You can thus see furniture and wall fabrics as they were, and they are all the more riveting for being slightly in tatters. The sometimes threadbare but always sumptuous rooms reminded me of Deborah Turbeville's desolate, disturbing pictures of Versailles. Here you can imagine aristocratic eighteenth-century life, private and public, being conducted, and even imagine yourself part of it. Though Turin is nearly as firmly planted in the present as Milan, every aspect of it is tinged by the past. Perhaps that is what makes it uniquely civilized.

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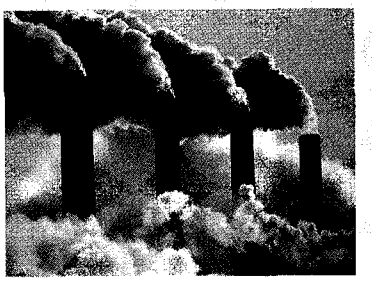

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SMALL-TOWN COP

by TRACY KIDDER

The glue of everyday life: episodes from the Northampton, Massachusetts, rounds of Sergeant Tommy O'Connor, scourge of the bad guys, ombudsman for the lost, the needy, the unsteady

FROM the summit of Mount Holyoke, in western Massachusetts, you look out on the valley of the Connecticut River, a broad landscape of cultivated fields and of forest sweeping away across the horizon, and, at the center, the old town of Northampton. It nests within natural boundaries. To the east the wide river bends around fields, planted mostly in corn. To the north and west the foothills of the Berkshires rise up in the blue distance, higher than Northampton's many steeples. The town was founded in 1654. Thirty thousand people live there now, roughly the same number as forty years ago, not many more than at the turn of the century. It's a place with a full set of parts—a college and a courthouse, rich farmland and a thriving old downtown, tree-lined streets of clapboard houses from the past century and a modern shopping strip that follows the line of the railroad tracks and the interstate, north toward Vermont, for a mile or so. From the summit it seems, like the corn fields beside it, a dream of perfect order, entirely coherent and self-contained, a place where a person might live a whole life and consider it complete, a tiny civilization all its own. Forget the messiness of years and days—every work of human artifice has a proper viewing distance. The town below fits in the palm of your hand. Shake it and it snows.

Illustrations by Robert Crawford

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He grew up here. He was the youngest of Jane and Bill O'Connor's seven children. His oldest sister called him "Todder" when he was an infant. His high school friends shortened his surname and rechristened him "Oakie." To teachers and other adults he was usually Tommy. His wife would call him Tom. All his nicknames and the diminutive accompanied him to adulthood. If you do all your growing up in the same small place, you don't shed identities. You accumulate them.

Tommy spent his childhood and adolescence on Forbes Avenue, just off Elm Street and a few blocks from Smith College, in a quiet neighborhood of both grand and ordinary homes. He was raised in a wood-framed house that a family of modest means could afford back then. The house was full to bursting with exuberant youth, and the neighborhood was so full of children that Tommy never felt a need to go beyond it, except for the sake of adventure. Early on summer mornings he would stand on the sidewalk in front of his family's house and hear a high-pitched cry or lift it first himself. Then the same call, from voices that hadn't changed yet, would sound up and down the streets, and soon barefoot children would appear from all directions, apparitions out of the gray dawn. Tommy's friend Ned emerged from just three doors up Forbes Avenue, and from their homes came Ethan and Lisa and Bobby and half a dozen more. They'd converge on the sidewalk and make plans, naming destinations—"Meet ya at the Hill," "Meet ya at White Rock," "Meet ya at the Dirt Mounds."

Tommy's world widened bit by bit, to take in other neighborhoods and villages within the town, such as Bay State, Leeds, and Florence, and every widening seemed dramatic to him, like an explorer's journey into an impossibly vast territory called Northampton. But the old neighborhood remained its center, and the friends from it his most enduring. Tommy was the kind of student about whom teachers say, "If only he'd apply himself." He was also the kind that teachers remember with special fondness and amusement out of the myriads they've taught. One of his report cards read, "He's doing better. But he's still talking." Through every stage of school he was surrounded by the warmth of popularity. Though he was hardly the best student or athlete, his high school classmates chose him to deliver their commencement address. "No jokes," the faculty adviser said, and Tommy obeyed. His classmates tittered anyway.

A lot of friends eventually moved away. Tommy stayed in town, and he became a local cop. In his neighborhood this wasn't an unusual thing for a boy to do when he grew up. Several had become cops. But Tommy's case was special. For as long as anyone could remember, he'd dreamed of becoming a policeman. At five years old he stood in the middle of Forbes Avenue dressed in a round postman's hat and pretended to direct the scanty traffic. In fourth grade he founded the O'Connor Detective Agency. He borrowed his father's old sewer commissioner's badge. His family's garage was the station house. Most of his friends were deputized. They made up flyers and distributed them all over the neighborhood: "If you have any mysteries or anything missing call the O'Connor Detective Agency." Soon bikes expanded their territory, and took them downtown.

Back then, in the early seventies, Northampton's Main Street looked like many others in old New England towns—the upper stories of many commercial buildings abandoned, some of their windows covered in plywood; money-lending and furniture stores occupying what once had been prime commercial space. Pleasant Street, off Main, was essentially a skid row, lined with buildings sheathed in tarpaper and with what the local cops called "fighting bars," where brawling men rolled around on sawdust-covered floors. The lovely old train station was

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Tommy's case was special. For as long as anyone could remember, he'd dreamed of becoming a policeman.

crumbling, its roof half caved in. Downtown had its attractions, though: Charlie's, where Tommy and his pals bought penny candy, and drugstores with creaking wooden floors and soda fountains that produced ice-cream sodas, cherry Cokes. Downtown was also something like a practice field. On their bikes he and his deputies followed suspicious-looking cars down Pleasant Street. Tommy got so good at mimicking a siren that now and then, he remembered, a driver actually pulled over, while he rode by looking innocent.

In junior high he joined the Police Explorer Scouts and stayed with them through high school, and in due course he went from being a ward of the town to being one of its wardens, dressed in blue polyester. In all his dreams Tommy spent the rest of his life in Northampton. He made a plan. He would remain a cop and rise to sergeant—and no higher for a long time, because higher office meant mostly desks and paperwork. He would marry and have a bunch of kids who would re-enact his own Northampton childhood—why not, when his had been so nearly perfect? And then, after he retired, he would run for mayor.

By the end of high school he'd already met the woman he wanted to marry, Jean Kellogg, a Yankee girl from a small neighboring hill town. She wasn't so sure about him. He courted her assiduously, and eventually won her over. They made an old-fashioned couple, for the 1980s. He and Jean bought a house. Tommy was supposed to move into it, alone. Jean didn't want to live with him before their wedding, and that was fine with him—he knew his parents wouldn't approve. But when the day arrived for him to pack up and leave his childhood home, he felt overcome by the prospect. He said he couldn't do it that day—he had to deal with an emergency at work. So Jean and his mother did the packing for him, and Jean fixed up his new place. Tommy was twenty-three with his own bachelor pad, and he knew he should feel emancipated. But when he climbed into bed that night, all he could think about was home. This was the first time in his life he'd gone to bed without saying good-night to his mother. He called her up.

"You did it to me," he said. "Your youngest is gone."

She didn't take the bait. "Yes," she said wearily. "Yes. Good night."

His professional career proceeded much as planned. As the years went by, he rose through the ranks on the Northampton force, from patrol officer to detective, and finally, after ten years, to sergeant in charge of patrol on the evening shift. He now commanded half a dozen young officers—a well-trained, grown-up version of the O'Connor Detective Agency.

Superficially Tommy had changed. He had been a chubby little boy, and trim and handsome in his twenties. Now he was about six feet tall and burly, not fat but with a layer of flesh concealing muscle, and his curly hair was gone. If he was going to be bald, he'd decided, he would be bald emphatically. Sergeant O'Connor shaved his head into a great expanse of skin and shined it up with aftershave before he went on duty. "Helmet Head," one of the other sergeants called him. Without hair above, Tommy's large nose looked larger. At times on duty his face looked hard, which was the effect he aimed for. The skinhead look was meant to be part of his policeman's uniform, but it didn't entirely conceal the softness of his hazel eyes.

In crayon on the wall inside his bedroom closet on Forbes Avenue, Tommy had written,

> Tom O'Connor September 29, 1972
> I want to be a policeman
> I am in sixth grade.

Twenty-three years later the inscription remained in the closet. Tommy went up to his old room and looked at it once in a while. It was like opening a scrapbook.

In the past most vivid to Tommy, downtown was a moldering, somnolent place. In the downtown now before him, the crumbling train station was entirely restored. It had become a busy fancy restaurant. So had a lot of other once moribund storefronts. Downtown encompassed only half a dozen city blocks. It was just a patch of city. But it now contained about forty restaurants serving a variety of international cuisines, eleven jewelry and twenty-two clothing shops, a dozen bookstores, seven crafts and art galleries, several nightclubs, two movie theaters. The plywood had come off all the upper-story windows of the commercial blocks. Lawyers and psychologists and hair salons now occupied the second floors. Tommy remembered the era when after graduation day at Smith College a stillness settled over Main Street and lingered for the summer. Now it was as if he'd blinked and looked again and the place was packed.

From one summer evening to another the scene through the windows of Tommy's cruiser looked much the same. The yellow streetlights and gaily colored lighted signs above storefronts illumined crowded sidewalks, down which flowed a mainstream of the middle-aged—mostly white but with some black, brown, and Asian faces in it. They made up the human background of downtown, normal-looking and casually dressed, in slacks and jeans and khakis, in sandals on

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these summer nights. Men and women, women and women, strolled arm in arm past street musicians. Now and then Tommy would see a cellist seated on a chair outside a coffee shop, or a troupe of Bolivian panpipers on the sidewalk by the Unitarian church. Most evenings the more ordinary sounds of a steel drum, a guitar, an accordion, a saxophone, came in the cruiser's open windows as he drove slowly by. Lines spilled out the doors of restaurants. People with that wifty academic look headed for readings at bookstores, and people of the avant-garde, in collarless shirts and the occasional beret, headed for the old bank building, recycled as an art gallery. Tommy would glance, and glance again, at the little knots of costumed youths loitering in Pulaski Park and by the information booth—skateboarders with their baseball caps turned backward, homeboys with baggy pants and gold chains, Goths in torn black clothes adorned with spiky jewelry. Often out in front of the Haymarket coffee shop a group of gothically attired youths sat in a circle on the sidewalk—some of Northampton's vegetarian anarchists, talking revolution and for now impeding only foot traffic.

The new downtown was lively and various, and—remarkable to Tommy—it was very peaceful. In the crowds, he spotted the familiar faces of city officials, local entrepreneurs, lawyers and judges he knew from court, doctors and professors from his old neighborhood—people who rarely got into the kind of trouble that he dealt with, though some of their children did. He would watch through his cruiser's windows as, unbeknownst to them, respectable citizens walked down the sidewalks right beside local felons, drug dealers, a paroled murderer or two. Many of the people on the summer streets came from out of town, looking for a good time. From years of checking license plates Tommy knew that on any given summer evening some visitors—sometimes more than a few—had long and violent criminal records. Yet for two years there hadn't been a murder on the streets of Northampton, and for several there'd been little more than minor disturbances on Main Street. Tommy thought his department deserved some of the credit. "I think some local officers have made it hard to be a criminal here," he said one summer evening. But he felt that something more mysterious than good policing had to be at work. He gazed out the cruiser's windows at busy, peaceful Main Street, and he shook his head. "I don't know what it is about this place. We get some serious criminals here, but they always seem to do their bad deeds someplace else." He put on a Latin homeboy's accent. "Up here they're chillin', chillin'."

Tommy had a gift for mimicking accents. His own had the plain sound of what linguists call standard American English, a sound typical of Northampton and the region. One heard many non-native accents around town these days—Brooklyn, Asian, East Indian, Latin. But once an accent gets established in a place, it tends to stick, surviving immigrations. Probably because Northampton was settled by people from Connecticut, the local accent lacked the broad *a* of Boston. Tommy's was as plain as New England accents get.

At times Tommy felt unwelcome in his uniform in the new downtown. One evening, for example, he spotted a man dealing drugs right out in the open, in front of a Main Street coffee shop. A small scene ensued: On a crowded sidewalk a bald-headed, burly cop was running his hands up and down the pants legs of a young black man who, with his hands behind his head, protested loudly, "Man, why you hasslin' me?" And about ten feet away a well-dressed white woman with a silk scarf around her neck watched the proceedings like an angry sentinel, her hands on her hips, her eyes glaring at the cop.

No doubt this woman was a well-intentioned citizen summoned to moral outrage. It was reasonable enough to see what she saw—one of society's vulnerable members suffering from the prejudice of an agent of the law. She couldn't have known that the man Tommy was frisking often worked for him as a drug informant and also dealt drugs himself, or that he had a long criminal record and a history of psychosis. To Tommy, the angry-looking woman was the prejudiced one. He imagined that he knew exactly what was going through her mind. "Obviously, I'm hassling a black man, and the next thing I'm gonna do is call him the *n*-word," he thought as he glanced at her. Her silent reproach got to him. "It almost makes you feel like you're doing something wrong," he told a fellow cop afterward, back at the police station. He put on a falsetto, a parody of the voice he imagined for her: "'How can that bald-headed cop indiscriminately pick on that nice man just because he's black. *I* know a black man. I don't know his name, but I've actually sat down at a table and spoken to him.'" Angrily Tommy concluded, "Yeah, well, she wouldn't like it if T. C. was selling drugs to *her* kid."

But native attitudes weren't monolithic. Tommy couldn't claim that some of his best friends were homosexuals, but three of his favorite colleagues on the force were openly gay. So were two of his favorite crime victims, a lesbian couple whose house had been robbed. He'd solved the crime, and they were grateful—and so was he, for their gratitude. Imagining homosexual sex made him uneasy, and he couldn't keep from imagining it. But lesbians here didn't commit any

Sometimes police work in Northampton could have an effect inconceivable in a large and violent city.

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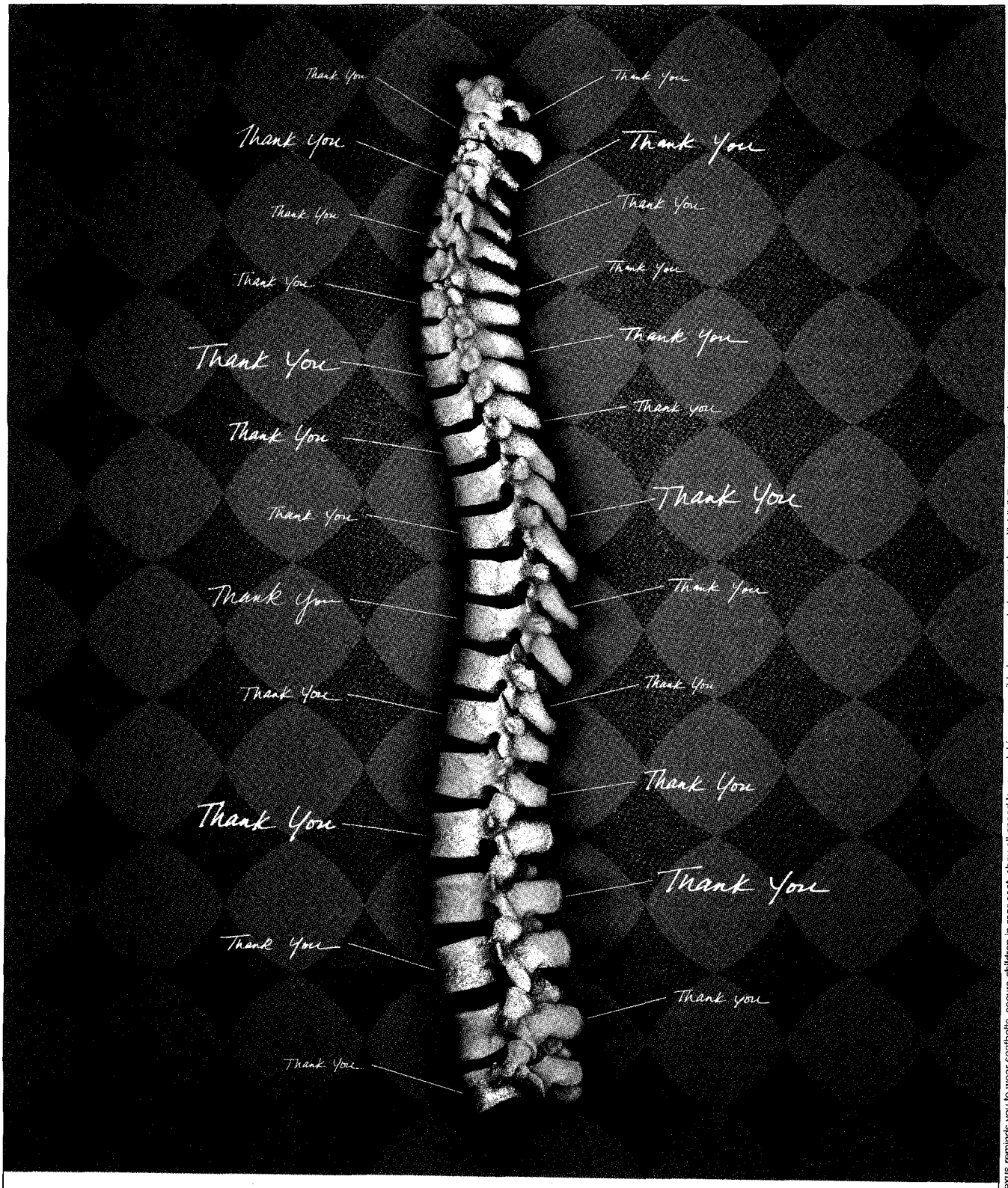

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crimes to speak of, and they'd shown themselves to be some of Northampton's most conscientious parents. Cruising down Main Street, catching sight of one of the many female couples in the town, he often exclaimed, "Lesbians are great! Gimme more! Why? They don't cause any trouble."

One thing that had certainly improved in Northampton was the police force. In the late 1970s a local cop was charged with attempted murder, and two others went to jail for burglarizing stores. Other malfeasance was dealt with quietly, and the force had essentially been rebuilt around the time when Tommy joined. A young cop once said to Tommy that he couldn't imagine cops beating up prisoners in Northampton. "It used to happen," Tommy replied. "And that's one reason why it doesn't now." On this subject his tone turned righteous. "There's an extreme brotherhood among police," he liked to say. "But I wouldn't stick up for a dirty cop. No way, shape, or form."

And so what if he himself didn't have much use for the new Main Street? Without newcomers and luxury shopping, Tommy figured, downtown would look like a lot of other old small city centers by now, like the place it had been turning into when he was a boy—shabby and empty at night, a place where citizens would be afraid to walk past doorways. Better a living Main Street than a dead one, Tommy thought.

Tommy expressed most of his views as declarations, and his views of Main Street were declaratively mixed. He stopped the cruiser at pedestrian crosswalks before people had even left the curb. He did this partly to set a good example for the other drivers, but it wasn't really necessary. Once they hit downtown, most drivers seemed to become pacified, to rediscover manners, to remember driver's education. People could amble across Main Street with alarming carelessness. Some cast lofty glances at the cars. Especially at cop cars, Tommy thought. "Gets my ass out," he muttered once, remembering a young woman who had walked slowly and haughtily in front of his cruiser even though he had his blue lights on.

But as he watched the passing street scene, the stiffness left his jaw and a smile began to blossom. On any given summer night the pedestrians in front of his windshield might include, mixed among the average-looking, a couple of young women with garlands in their hair, an earnest-looking young man with a slinky ferret on a leash, a woman in a pair of platform shoes so tall they nearly qualified as stilts. "How can she do anything serious in those shoes?" Tommy said. A man in a black cape went by, carrying a wand. "There goes Mr. Magico. Why doesn't he make himself disappear?" A former mental patient, a special ward of Tommy's and of some other cops', strode across the street, lifting his knees high, his fingers splayed rigidly apart. He wore a furry hat with a feather in it. "I believe he'd call that a plume," Tommy said. Then came a group of boys and girls with burgundy hair, orange hair, India-ink hair, hair that stood up in spikes like a rooster's comb. He'd asked one of those kids for the secret—heavy applications of Ivory soap. He liked these nightly motley promenades. They enlarged his town. He hadn't had to leave Northampton to sample the sights of urban America. The world had come to him. "In downtown Northampton every day is Halloween," he'd say. "And every night is New Year's Eve."

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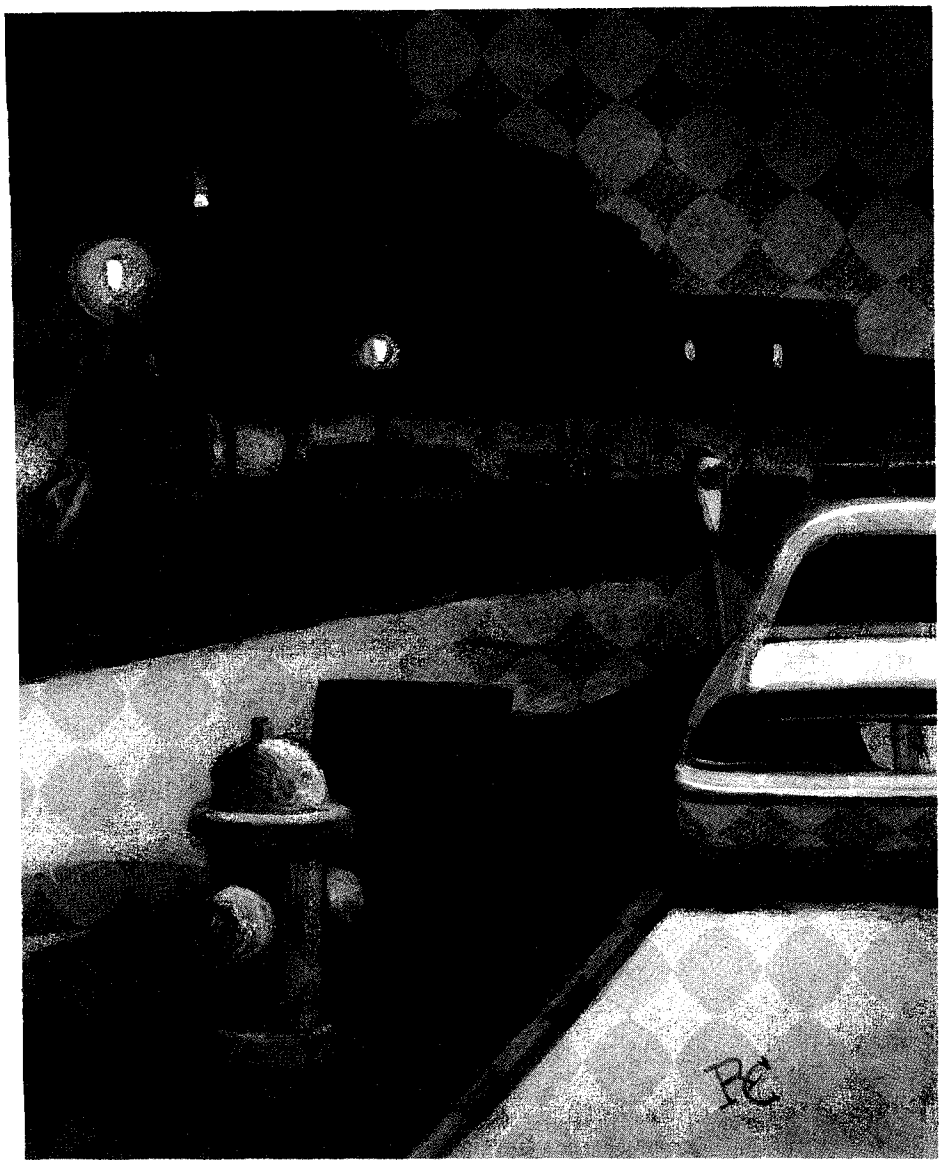

The young men denied that they were Latin Kings.

Really? Tommy asked. Then how come they were wearing T-shirts that read ALMIGHTY LATIN KING NATION?

"Yo, man, you can have my shirt," one of them said, disrobing on the spot.

About a year after that incident Tommy was talking to a former gang member named Felix, a young man he'd known as a baby. Tommy asked him if many gang members came to Northampton, and Felix said, "No, not too many, man. They don't want to come here. They get hassled by cops. Yeah, they say *you*, O'Connor! They say you go up there and the bald-headed cop takes your shirts!"

EVERY day at a few minutes after three, when the workday was almost over for most people, Sergeant O'Connor emerged from the side door of the police station, a block away from Main Street. The sun glinted off his shiny head. He wore a blue shirt with sergeant's stripes on the sleeves, dark pants, black boots, and a clip-on necktie (because a real one could become a noose). All uniforms make the people in them seem easily understood. When Tommy emerged in uniform onto the streets of Northampton, leather creaking and hardware softly jangling, he rolled his shoulders and held his arms bowed out a little from his sides, as if he fancied himself a weight lifter and a gunfighter all in one. The impression he made, of confidence and force, wasn't altogether wrong, or unintended. But in fact he rolled his shoulders to adjust the protective vest he wore beneath his shirt, and all the equipment on his belt forced his arms out from his sides.

About ten pounds of hardware hung from his uniform—pistol, pepper spray (the safest means all round of subduing suspects and mental patients who have begun to fight), pouches full of ammo and rubber gloves, two pairs of handcuffs, a kielbasa-sized flashlight for the dark hours of his shift, and a PR-24 baton (a modern version of the old nightstick). One afternoon he was heading for the supervisor's cruiser when he spotted a man in a wheelchair rolling by on Center Street.

An informant had told Tommy that this man was using heroin again. Tommy walked over to him. The man's legs looked like a rag doll's. Tommy hooked his thumbs over his

It would be hard to prove that police work matters more where it's needed less, but sometimes he could have an effect inconceivable in a large and violent city. One day back in 1993 a former member of the Latin Kings gang hailed Tommy and told him that a carload of Kings had just tried to abduct him. And they would have succeeded, this young man said, if Tommy hadn't happened to drive by and scare them off. "The Kings got a termination out on me," the former member said. Tommy took off after the car. He stopped it at downtown's busiest intersection, right in front of the courthouse. A lot of pedestrians gathered to watch. Tommy got out and walked up to the car, wanting to search it. Knowing he was on shaky legal ground, he decided to create a spectacle. It was the kind of decision that had made him a pariah to a number of local defense attorneys. He found necklaces of gang beads in the car. He held them up for all the crowd to see, and he bellowed at the young men, "Gang activity in Northampton will not be tolerated! You will not come to Northampton wearing your colors and displaying gang signs!"

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"I haven't had the heart to bust him. I don't know. If I was in a wheelchair, I might take heroin too."

belt buckle. He stood with his feet wide apart. He looked immense beside the man, but he was smiling. After a little small talk, Tommy said, "By the way, you ever hear of C-smack? Comes in a yellow package, says 'C-smack' on it?"

The man in the wheelchair shook his head. He looked away and then up at Tommy. "I'm clean now, Tommy. You know that."

"Good man," Tommy said. "But just a heads-up, in case you fall. Stay away from that stuff. Last week? We took a guy out of an apartment in Florence who died from it."

Tommy watched the man roll off toward Main Street. "I haven't had the heart to bust him. I don't know. If I was in a wheelchair, I might take heroin too."

He walked over to his cruiser, a big Ford with head-snapping acceleration. He opened the trunk and inspected the gear inside—emergency medical equipment, extra pairs of rubber gloves for handling bloody situations, a life-preserver ring for emergencies along Northampton's riverfront, antibacterial soap for washing his hands after various potentially infectious incidents. He climbed in and tested his radios—they connected him to all the police forces in western Massachusetts and to the dispatcher at the station and his patrol officers. He placed his binoculars beside the driver's seat, especially handy for observing drug deals from a distance. He tested the cruiser's gaudy strobe-light show and medley of piercing siren noises. He took the .12-gauge shotgun out of its rack on the floor and made sure it was loaded—not that he was likely to need it, but you never know. He rolled down the windows and turned the air-conditioner on full blast. Then he put the cruiser in gear. "I'm in a ridin' mood," he said.

Tommy hadn't driven far when he heard trouble coming over his radio. One of his young patrolmen was arresting a citizen for driving an improperly registered car—an "unarrestable" offense. Tommy flicked on his blue lights and siren and raced to the scene. He arrived just as the patrolman had finished snapping handcuffs on the driver. Tommy jumped out and strode toward them. "Officer! Officer! Take those handcuffs off that man! This man is a *good* man!" The young cop obeyed and stepped aside. Tommy stood before the citizen and, lifting his right hand high, made the sign of the cross over him. "You are unarrested! Go in peace." It worked. The citizen stuck out his hand to shake with Tommy.

Tommy told the young cop to meet him back at the station, where he took him to an office, closed the door, and said, "Go and arrest someone else, but make sure you have the right to do it. Remember, this is the largest power you have." The young cop apologized. Tommy said, "Be thankful it was an ignorant civilian and not a lawyer. But it was an honest mistake, and it's not goin' past here." Tommy paused. He smiled. "Unless the guy complains."

He spent a part of every shift following his officers to accidents and to calls from citizens in distress, and in between he did his own patrolling. Each of the junior officers was confined to a sector of town, but Tommy's jurisdiction encompassed all of Northampton—thirty-six square miles of land, crisscrossed by about 170 miles of roads. In the course of a week he drove all of them, varying the pattern of his rounds so as not to make himself predictable to Northampton's criminal class. He drove past ranch houses on the suburban roads, past supermarkets, car dealerships, and fast-food restaurants on King Street—Northampton's Anywhere, U.S.A. He drove through the small and usually quiet villages within the town and explored the wooded spots by the railroad tracks where homeless people slept in cardboard shelters, under plastic construction wrap. He cruised slowly past the playgrounds and through the parks and parking lots and old residential neighborhoods, past the apartment complexes, rooming houses, and public-housing projects.

On a housing-project street he rolled up beside two brown-skinned Hispanic boys who stood outside one of the units. They wore hooded sweatshirts even though the air was warm—probably for the pockets. A cop can't look in pockets without probable cause.

"Whussup, O'Connah?"

"Whussup wit' you, my man?"

"Chillin'."

"Ricky, I been knowin' you since you were a baby, and I've never seen you look this stoned before."

"That's where you're wrong, O'Connah. I ain't smoked a blunt today."

Tommy shook his head at him. "Stay out of trouble."

He pulled up beside a boy carrying a metal pipe fashioned into a club. The evening before, Tommy had heard rumors of an impending gang fight—kid talk that would probably come to nothing. But the pipe was real enough. "Hey!" Tommy said, pointing out the window at the pipe. "Give me that!"

The boy obeyed. "These fuckin' guys with guns and shit."

"Where?"

"I don't know."

"So what you gonna be? Superman? Banging bullets with your pipe? You call me. I got a gun."

"You won't get here soon enough."

"I'm always here."

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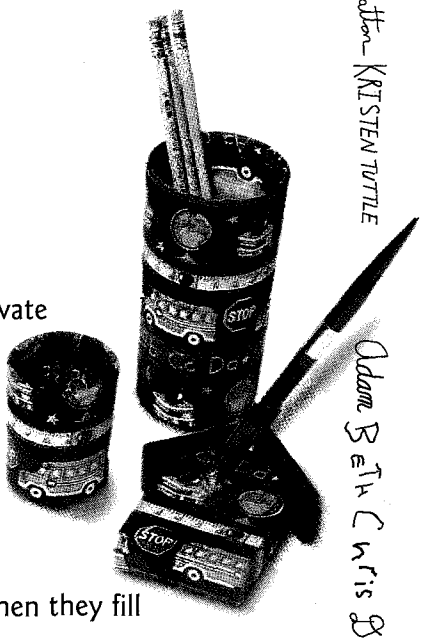
Who can do more than ever thought possible? "I can."

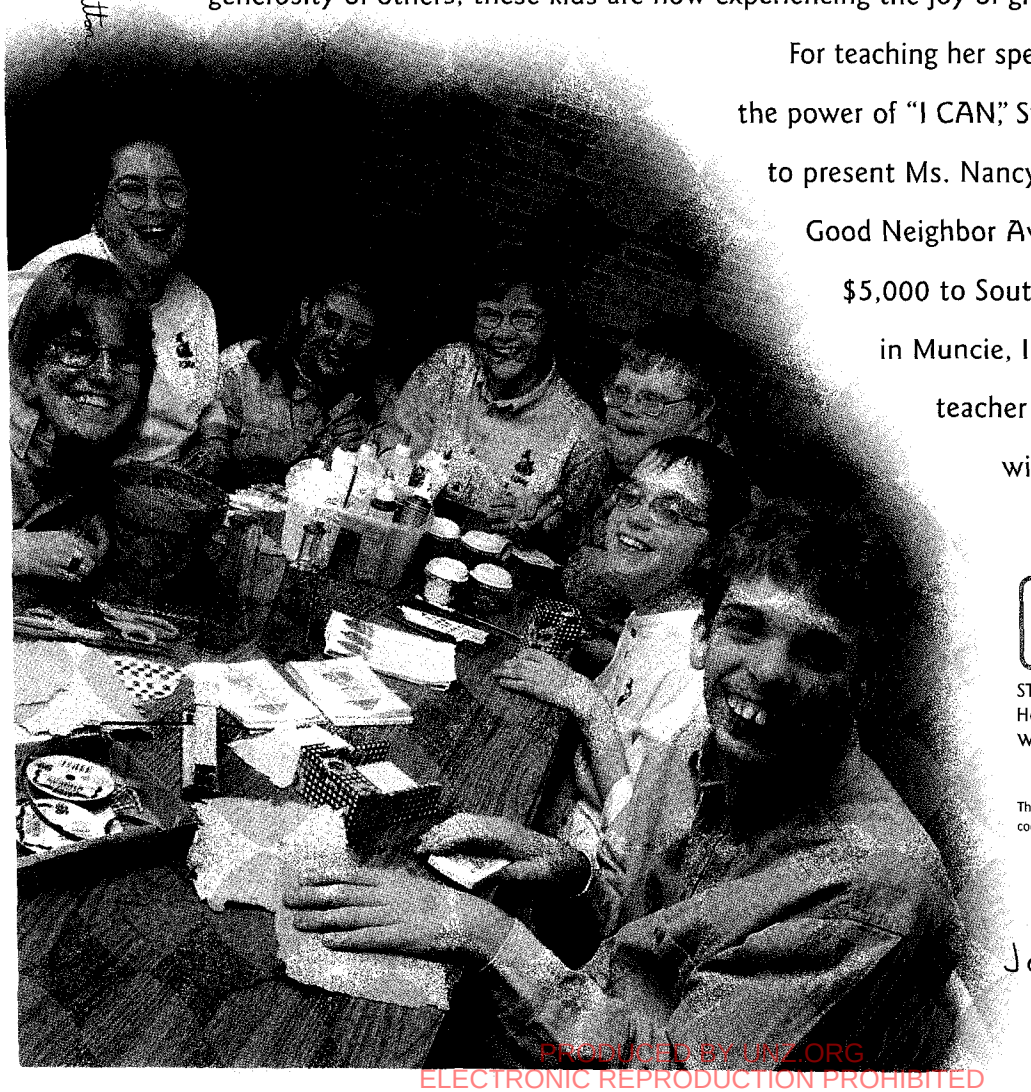
Marie Mimon Mike Slaven Rashone Thompson Hatton Kristen Tuttle



Adam Gross Bradley Herbert Carla Cooper Cathy Hatton

The "I CAN" program is an ingenious way to educate and motivate kids who may have thought, "I can't." Nancy Barnett helps her special needs students create and sell a wide range of craft items such as paperweights, stationery and placemats which are available in the "I CAN" shop in their high school.

The most rewarding part of the program for the students is when they fill laundry baskets with a selection of housewarming gifts they've made and personally deliver them to new Habitat for Humanity homeowners. After years of receiving the generosity of others, these kids are now experiencing the joy of giving themselves.



For teaching her special needs students the power of "I CAN," State Farm is pleased to present Ms. Nancy Barnett with our Good Neighbor Award and to donate $5,000 to Southside High School in Muncie, Indiana. What other teacher could do so much with two little words?

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"All right, O'Connah, I'll call you. I will."

"Good man. Stay out of trouble."

He drove a little farther on and stopped, and a group of small boys and girls crowded up beside his window. Some shyly stroked the cruiser's spotlight, and others asked if they could make announcements to the project on the PA system. Tommy handed them the microphone and played the siren for them, just as he used to do for the young man with a wild-looking shock of hair, like a tassel on a cornstalk, who was just now walking past. "Suck my nuts, O'Connah."

"Hey! Come here, Rodolfo!"

The young man turned, grabbed his wild-looking hair, and said, "You want some hair, O'Connah?" Then he puckered up his lips and made a kiss, and sauntered on.

The muscles flexed in Tommy's jaw. "Oh, man, sometimes I wish I worked thirty years ago," he said. "So when Rodolfo blows a kiss at me, I could stop and split his head wide open." According to the stories, in days gone by Northampton's cops didn't suffer insults from teenagers but took them to the station and beat them up with phone books. In his time Tommy had wrestled with a number of people he'd come to arrest, but, rumors notwithstanding, he had never beaten up a prisoner.

He sometimes looked as though he might—when, for instance, he yanked open the back door of a patrolman's cruiser and glared at the teenage boy sitting in the back seat. The boy had repeatedly given the patrolman a false name. Tommy stuck his head in the door and gave the boy his stare.

For years Tommy had studied and practiced street tactics. Nowadays, to supplement his pay, he taught them at the police academy in a larger town nearby. Some tactics he invented for himself. His stare, for instance, which he used on tough guys and people who were clearly lying. Frozen in the stare, his jaw thrust forward, his bald head glistening, he looked implacable and cruel. Staring usually worked. Tough and distraught people usually grew docile. The look did not come naturally. He'd had to spend a long time practicing in mirrors, lifting one eyebrow, lowering the other, and fixing his eyes on the glass as if to look right through it. He stared that way at the boy in the back seat. "What's your name?" he growled.

The boy gave him the same false reply.

Tommy yelled in his face. "You're lying! You have candles in your eyes!" He added more softly, "As my mother used to say."

It took a while, but the boy came clean eventually, and Tommy resumed his patrol.

Ten years had filled his patrols with memories. They waited in the landscape. He drove through the old industrial neighborhood called Bay State, past what used to be the Clean Bore factory, and in his mind's eye the summer evening turned snowy. He remembered following footprints in the snow from the factory's front door and along the bank of the Mill River. He was an almost brand-new cop. It was getting dark when he saw the burglar up ahead. Tommy started running, his flashlight in one hand, his pistol in the other, yelling for the thief to halt. And then the figure turned, and in the beam of his flashlight Tommy saw a boy with a harried, frightened face, holding a shotgun, the double barrel—the gun's two large, empty pupils—pointed at Tommy's chest. Tommy raised his pistol, about to shoot. But he didn't. The police-department brass questioned Tommy rather harshly afterward. Why hadn't he shot the kid? How could he have been so sure the shotgun wasn't loaded? Tommy still couldn't name his reasons—there was just something about the scene, the look on the boy's face, the way the kid had held the weapon.

As far as Tommy knew, no one had pointed a gun at him since. Almost a decade had passed since a cop got shot at or shot at someone here. Northampton was a peaceful town. Tommy often told himself that thinking so was dangerous. He did target practice and cleaned his guns regularly, rehearsed situations in his mind at night in bed, and, as he drove by, couldn't help remembering that long-ago evening in the snow.

Dramatic incidents came rarely. He spent a large part of every evening shift making friendly greetings, beeping at old friends and the parents of old friends in passing cars, waving to an old classmate, now a reporter for the local paper (*The Daily Hampshire Gazette*, continuously published since 1786), calling "Good evening, Your Honor" to the mayor as she walked out of city hall. He spotted a lawyer, one he liked, on a sidewalk and called to him through the cruiser's PA system, his amplified voice echoing off the buildings, "Charlie! It's good to see you wearing men's clothes again!" He turned down a side street and called to a staggering drunk, "Hey, Campbell! You told me you weren't gonna do anything stupid. Go home and go to bed!" He rolled up beside a respectable-looking middle-aged man, a former coach of his. "Did you get your kid to say where he got it?" "It" was marijuana.

"No," the man said. "Not yet."

"Okay," Tommy said. "Let me know."

Over the radio the dispatcher's voice announced an elderly woman in trouble. Tommy found her upstairs in a bedroom of her house. She lay groaning on the floor, an overturned chair beside her. A neighbor had already called for an ambulance. Tommy stripped a blanket off the bed and

Tommy's staring worked. Tough and distraught people usually grew docile. The look did not come naturally.

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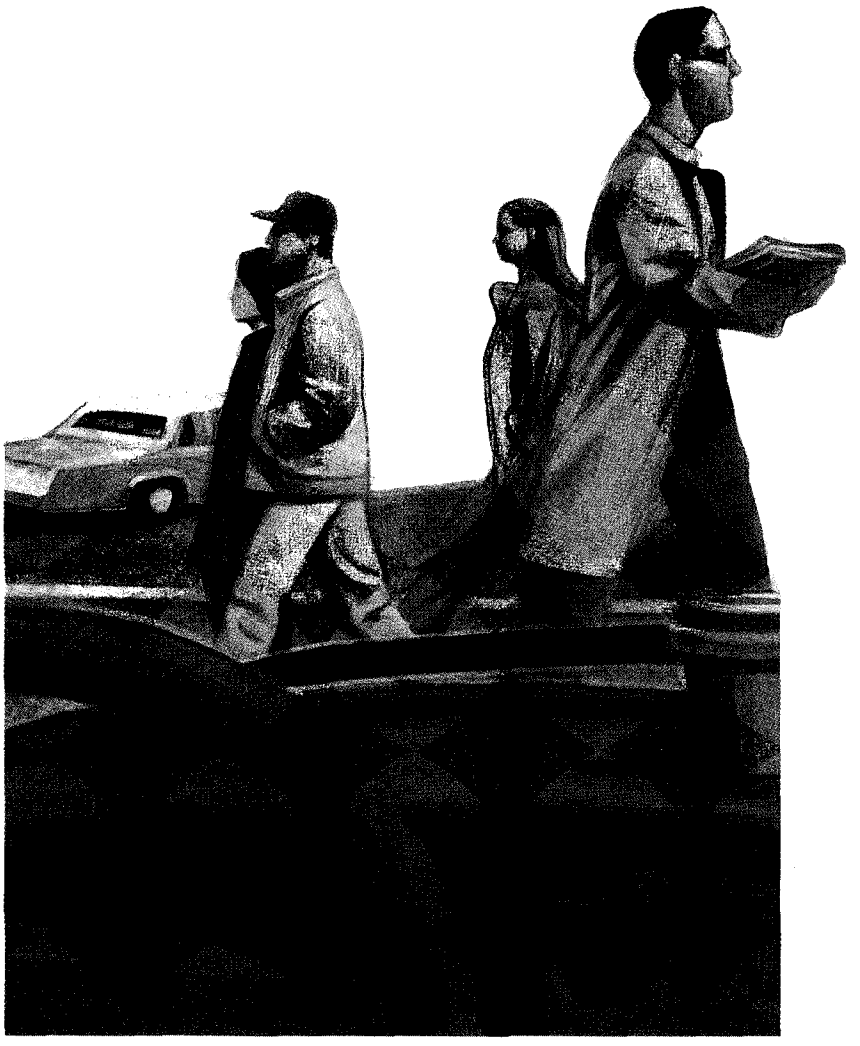
arranged it over the old woman. She moaned on, looking up at him with frightened eyes. Tommy sat down on the floor beside her. She said that she had been watering a plant and had fallen off the chair. She had a thick French-Canadian accent. She didn't want to go to the hospital. That's where people go to die, she said. Tommy put a hand on her shoulder. "No. No. I know the people there. They're very nice. They'll fix you up in no time." Then he changed the subject. They talked about her relatives, her years here in town, until the ambulance arrived. "I'll come and see you," Tommy said, as they carried her away.



On many evenings he made an arrest or two, sometimes one he had looked forward to. Shortly after dark, hiding in the shadows at the rear of Pulaski Park, he caught a young man selling LSD—a young man with a small goatee, who dressed in black, occasionally wore a cape, and, Tommy believed, wielded a malign influence over the younger teenagers always loitering in the park. Those kids, at any rate, referred to him as "God." Tommy usually chatted up people he was arresting, but God was one of those old adversaries who taunted him. Tommy made a loud, braying laugh after he snapped handcuffs onto God. "So I guess this makes me Pontius Pilate, right?"

He caught a boy skateboarding up King Street, in violation of a Northampton ordinance. "Crime of the century," Tommy, a former skateboarder himself, told the boy. "But you're outside the city limits. I just moved them up. Have a good night."

On the sidewalk beside a quiet street in the village of Florence the cruiser's headlights brushed across the figure of a boy unsteady on his feet. Tommy got out and walked him home to his mother's house. They stood together on the front porch, the boy protesting, "*Dude*. How can you say I'm drunk?"

"Because most people when they try to crack their knuckles don't punch themselves in the chin," Tommy said, pressing the doorbell.

He still liked all this—dealing with the undramatic, playing ombudsman to the lost, the needy, the unsteady, in his home town. Administering stern reprimands to the boys he caught throwing snowballs at cars, as he used to do; wagging a finger at the drivers who didn't think he saw them make illegal turns; saying to a carful of gray-haired women who asked if he knew the way to Alumnae House at Smith College, "Follow me, ladies." Many nights he stopped at the emergency room in the Cooley Dickinson Hospital, to follow up on an accident, to interview a suspect, to help the staff with a dangerous patient. The charge nurse, Mary Lou Greene, used to baby-sit for Tommy. She liked to remind him: "I can remember changing your diapers," she'd say. Sometimes, once he had finished his work there, he got Mary Lou or one of the other nurses to take his blood pressure. Repeatedly the measurements told him that it rose, not dangerously but markedly, when he was in uniform. Ten years as a local cop in his small native place, and he still felt excited when he went out patrolling his town and heard the desk officer's voice come over the radio, calling for him.

"Eighty-three," the desk officer's voice said. "We have a call for a dog locked inside a car."

The desk officer's voice sounded weary. Tommy's voice rose. "Why do people call the police because of a dog in a car?" he cried, as he headed toward the scene. "Why not? Who else they gonna call? This is a great job."

TOMMY always had a compulsion to be busy, and ten years of compulsively busy police work had left a great deal of the town transparent to him. He knew the insides of most of the larger buildings and of thousands of houses and apartments, and of all the spots where youth repaired to drink and experiment with drugs. He knew the escape routes that

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burglars and hit-and-run drivers were likeliest to take, and not always but often he had gone to just the right spot to intercept them.

He didn't know everyone in town, not by any means, but it seemed as if he might know half, and as if more than half knew him. All evening long voices called to him as he passed in his cruiser—friends, acquaintances, adversaries. All evening long people he had once arrested, young and middle-aged, white, black, and Hispanic, came up to his window. He knew their family histories, their special weaknesses. They told him what exemplary lives they were leading now. "Hey, O'Connor! I'm working seven days a week. Nine dollars an hour under the table." "I'm working! Eighteen weeks!" "Oh, man, I got in trouble once, but I'm stayin' out of trouble, workin' man." "I got a job now, got a wife. I'm clean, too, man. Hey, O'Connor, I got a kid now." He pulled into a housing project and Willie, a notorious scammer and crack addict, walked over and said, "Have no fear, Willie's here. That's because I go to the hospitals and do all the laundry, you know what I'm sayin', O'Connor?"

Maybe people like Willie simply said anything to get him off their backs, but it usually sounded as if they wanted something else besides—something like approval, or absolution. By the midpoint of a shift Tommy often began to feel like Northampton's father confessor. He played the role. He half believed in it. To all of those anti-confessions Tommy replied, "Good for you. Stay out of trouble." As he drove away, he mused, "I wonder if they think I actually believe them. They probably do. It makes them feel better."

Sometimes he seemed neither priest nor cop but more nearly social worker, a comparison he would have resented. Inside a cramped living room, in a small rented Northampton house, a young woman sat before him, her face in her hands. Her wrists looked as thin as wishbones. The room contained what furniture dealers call a living-room set, the kind that newlyweds buy. The plaid upholstery was stained.

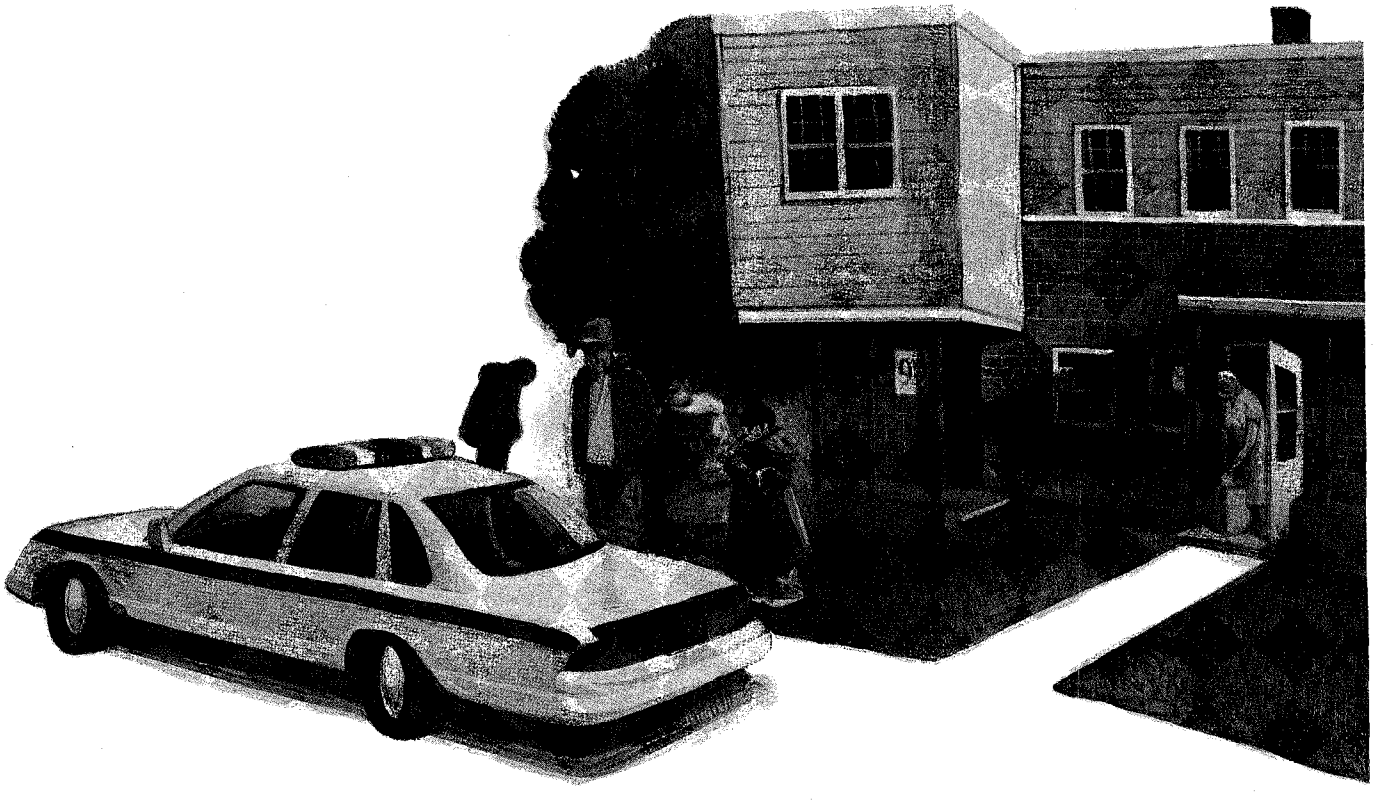
The young woman glanced up at Tommy. In his black boots and tidy uniform he looked, as always, too large and military for a domestic scene, like a soldier barging in. She said in a reedy voice, "I don't want to go to jail."

"We're not here to arrest you," Tommy told her. His voice sounded very loud and brassy, the voice of social norms, feared and resented and, this time, strangely at odds with what he said. "We didn't advise you of your rights, which means that anything you talk to us about we're not gonna use against you. We're gonna leave here, you're gonna stay here, and that's gonna be the end of it. We're not here to charge you criminally. We don't *want* to charge you criminally. That's what we want to *avoid.* Okay? So if you have heroin here you want to get rid of, give it to the detective, and it's gonna be out of here and you'll never hear about it again."

She put her head back in her hands, weeping softly.

Tommy told her, "Look at me." She hardly seemed to dare. He counted on his fingers. "One, you're not going to be the mother that you are and can be for your kids. And two, you're going to get a hot load some night, and that's gonna be the end of it. Then you got a bunch of pretty little kids with nothin'."

She cleared her throat. "I'm so embarrassed."



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Ten years as a local cop in his small native place, and he still felt excited when he went out patrolling.

"Well, don't be embarrassed. And we can hook you into the right things to try to get you some help. You're the only one that can help yourself, but at least we can get you in the direction that *maybe* you can do something for yourself, or for your kids."

She started crying again. "I don't care about myself," she said, sobbing.

"Well, you got to learn to care about yourself. How bad a habit do you have now?"

"Basically, I just need some time." Her voice rose. "I don't want to get in trouble."

"Honestly! Hey, lookit, you're *not going to get in trouble*."

"I just . . ."

"How old are you now?"

She looked up at him again. "Twenty-five?"

"You got a lot of years ahead of you."

She put her face back in her hands. "I'm so embarrassed."

"*Don't* be embarrassed." Silence descended on the room, except for her sniffles. "Will you take my suggestion, or at least hear it?"

"Sure." But she didn't look at him.

"Take the advice of the detective here. Talk to your friend, who wants to sit down with you. A person concerned about you. Have that person help you. Don't let this guy you're living with influence you. Have someone who cares about you, who's really interested in you. Not *him*."

She seemed to stiffen. She stared at the floor. "Tell ya honestly," Tommy said. "If you *don't* listen to us and you just continue on? I'll think it's sad, but it's not going to make me not sleep at night. Because there's a lot more people out there with the same problem. You're getting an opportunity here to do something, and I would take it. How are your kids doing?"

"Oh, *they're* fine."

"How old are they?"

"Eight and five?"

"Well, the eight-year-old's old enough to start to figure things out."

She said she'd let her friend come and talk to her, but wasn't ready to do more.

"All right. Good luck," Tommy said.

It was dark when he came outside. He looked back at the lighted windows of the little house. "That could be enough to bottom her out. Maybe not. Would it surprise me if a week from now we go there for an overdose? Not in the least bit." He climbed into his cruiser and started driving, back on his rounds, musing aloud. "I don't get discouraged over it anymore, because if I went in there thinking that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Dudley Do-Right just walked in and now the world's going to be fine for her, and then I find out differently and I'm bothered by that—and I would be, she's a nice kid!—then I'd be bothered all the time. Because the vast majority of people don't take you up on your advice. Like domestics. You go back there and the woman's still with the freaking moron. There's more to it than what we see."

These days when Tommy went to a house or an apartment, it was usually not to look for drugs but to sort out an argument. On an average of four out of every five days domestic life somewhere in town turned into "a domestic."

And some were repeat performances. Tommy stood, wearing his fierce, implacable stare, in a living room he'd visited two weeks earlier. That time the girlfriend had accused the boyfriend of pushing her around, and Tommy had locked the boyfriend up. This time the boyfriend claimed the girlfriend had abused him. She'd scratched him, he said, and he had the marks on his arm to prove it. Tommy stood between them, his arms folded on his chest, like the Colossus. He thought he'd like to leave them here to finish each other off, but then he had a better idea.

"You have a restraining order against you being here, for abuse," he said to the boyfriend.

"I didn't abuse her. I didn't touch her."

"I understand. I believe you, but what I'm doin' here is I'm not gonna play Solomon. I'll tell you what, what did I tell you the last time we were here?"

The young woman interrupted. "He smashed my phone!"

"Stay away," the young man said to Tommy.

"There you go," Tommy said. He turned to the young woman. "Last time we were here, did you tell us you were pregnant? Is that still a factor?"

"No."

"Okay. Is he the father of your kid, is that what the deal is? No? I'll tell you what, if I were you guys, you've done about as much as you can with this relationship. I'd call it quits. Now you're *both* going to jail."

Northampton was a town of many happy families Tommy had never met. "No one ever calls and says, 'Hey, we're getting along great today!'" Tommy said, after his men had taken the couple away. "It's just miserable stuff we deal with. And it's fun. It's not happening to me."

It was snowing, a blizzard, and the wind whistled through the opening Tommy left in the cruiser's window, like breath across a bottle top. He parked beside Augie's rooming house, downtown. One of the patrolmen

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"That's what it's all about! I'm all for go out and catch the bad guys, but if you can save a life!"

stood in the doorway waiting for Tommy. The manager had called the cops to demand that they roust a pair of legendary local drunks, trespassers in a tenant's room. "If they're cocked, we could PC 'em," Tommy told the younger cop—put them into protective custody. "It'd be a nice thing to do for 'em."

Joe and Michelle were sitting on the wooden floor of a room under a bare light bulb. Michelle had a girlish face and dead-looking teeth. She said, in her liquor-thickened voice, "Hey, Tommy, I got a joke for you. It's really terrible. What did the duck say to the waiter? Just put it on my bill."

Tommy smiled. "Okay, you've been trespassed," he said, and left them there.

"Love through the bottom of a bottle," Tommy said when he got outside. "We did our job," he explained to the young patrolman. "We told them to leave, but we left first. What the hell's the point of throwing them out in this shit?"

It was getting dark. Tommy was driving through snowdrifts, chortling, when the dispatcher called. A teenage boy had been playing football with friends at the Meadowbrook apartment complex. The boy had fallen down and wasn't breathing. Tommy grimaced. He had no good memories of incidents like this. The cruiser's siren sounded muffled in the falling snow. The car seemed afloat, drifting sideways around corners. He managed to take a sip of his coffee. "Something to throw up when he pukes in my mouth." It was a white-and-black scene in the twilight, the crowd looking on, silent except for the mother. Tommy moved her away, while she screamed in Spanish over his shoulder. An off-duty cop, who happened to be driving by when the call came in, crouched over a small, quiet, supine figure. Tommy ran through the drifts in loping strides, and took a turn, kneeling down, rocking back and forth, compressing the boy's chest. Then the medical technicians took over with machines. "Tom, get the suction, the board, and the stretcher." Soon, with methodical haste, the cops and technicians were wading toward the ambulance, carrying the stretcher. They looked like pallbearers, but the boy was breathing again.

In the cruiser, driving slowly toward the hospital, Tommy beat his hand on the steering wheel. "That's what it's all about! That's all of it! I'm all for go out and catch the bad guys, but if you can save a life!"

He stood in the hall outside the emergency room, his face flushed, chatting with the emergency technicians. Their faces were flushed too. One said, "If it works, it's my first time."

"When I worked midnights, they called me the Angel of Death," Tommy said. He turned to shake hands with the head technician.

A nurse came out. "Nice for a change, huh?" she said.

"Hey, now I'm one for twenty-one!" Tommy said. He stopped in the waiting room, where the parents were sitting. He hadn't paid much attention in high school Spanish class, but he knew a few phrases. *"Buena suerte."*

"Gracias."

SEVERAL months later, a warm evening. Tommy turned south on lower Pleasant Street. In the vista framed by the cruiser's windshield a dark thunderstorm that wouldn't come this way hovered over the Holyoke Range, lit from the west, a wall of green rising up to meet a dark-purple sky. For human eyes there was ferment where the colors met.

Tommy turned around and headed back toward downtown. He glanced at the little storefront of Primitive Leathers. "Whip me, beat me, make me feel cheap!" Tommy cried. He passed by. "I think cops here have to be a little more open-minded than they do in a lot of other places." He added, "Sometimes I think Northampton is the four corners of everywhere. Maybe every place is, but I think we have a little more. Maybe it's all those psychologists' shingles."

So many towns this size look sadly out of date on a summer night. But what an imaginative-looking place this is on shirt-sleeve evenings, the old buildings rolling by—one with a rounded end like the stern of a Pullman car, and one with a turret on the top that looks as if it belongs in a fairy tale, and many others with their window sashes painted cheery colors.

The cruiser turned down Crafts Avenue, past a graffito on the brick wall of an alley: ROMANCE IS NOT SEXY. So much for champagne and candlelight. But on any given summer evening, on the sidewalks that surrounded downtown's churches, the attractions of the natural world, the human hunger for one another, right now, right here on earth, were visible through the cruiser's windows: Northampton boulevardiers in Birkenstocks making their moves on women draped in colorful Third World fabrics. In storefront after little storefront plumage was on sale, in dress shops and jewelry stores, and in boutiques that sold incense and exotic robes and sexy underwear. One hawker handed out ads for Self-Esteem Electrolysis, another for a show at the Fire and Water Cafe, where a moonlighting college professor would perform an original one-woman cabaret titled "Conceptual Orgasm." Quick, furtive-looking swallows disappeared beneath a gutter over the awning of a shoe store, as if birds, too, had secret assignations. A buxom transvestite ambled across Main Street. "Look at the rack on that guy," Tommy

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said. "But, hey! This is America." A pair of women in short shorts went jogging by. "I better get out of here. I'm having impure thoughts."

Shortly after dark Tommy parked his cruiser behind city hall and sneaked around to the rear of Pulaski Park. Standing in the shadows, he surveyed the place. He was looking for teenagers dealing drugs and drinking. Instead he saw a female couple on a bench, locked in heavy petting, like a single figure with the several arms of Shiva. He turned away and headed back for his cruiser. In the parking lots behind Main Street he glimpsed a familiar sight—girls whose parents wouldn't let them out dressed in immodestly short skirts crouching behind their cars, changing into their dancing clothes.

He drove to the upper deck of the parking garage to render advice to one of the young officers, who had come across an awkward situation—a young woman's battered car parked beside her boss's Mercedes. When the patrolman shined his flashlight into the more expensive car's back seat, the couple were about to be in flagrante delicto. No crime in that, but the woman's car was improperly registered. Tommy conferred with the officer. "You have every legal right to take her plate. *Or* you can cut them some slack." Tommy drove away. "I guess she's trying to move up in the world," he said. "When the weather gets warm, it's amazing where people will fuck. It just proves that people are part of the animal kingdom."

TOMMY was driving in the cruiser south of downtown when the dispatcher called him over the radio, saying in a slightly elevated voice, "Eighty-three, we have a report of an individual pointing a gun out a window, over Main Street Cleaners."

"Yeah, sure," Tommy said. He unclipped the microphone from the dashboard. "All right. I'll check it out."

Old South Street rises steeply toward Main. Tommy stopped at the intersection, at the crest of the hill. Main Street was packed. Before him lay a typical summer evening scene. Women being led along the sidewalks by their dogs (notable how many dog owners Northampton had), a young woman in the crosswalk blowing bubbles through a little bubbleblowing wand, wobbly, rainbow-colored spheres rising in the air. There was the usual sort of human background of ordinary-looking couples, some with ice-cream cones, strolling down the sidewalk past the cleaners, and also, above the cars and crowd, leaning out a second-story window, the figure of a thin young man with dark hair. He held a black object in his right hand. "Jesus Christ!" Tommy yelled, leaning forward toward the windshield. His eyes looked almost cartoonlike, as if bulging at the sight.

Tommy grabbed his binoculars from their place beside his seat. He focused them on the boy in the window, who was holding what looked like a black automatic, the size and shape of a Luger. He moved it from side to side, as if it were a paintbrush, over the strolling crowd below.

Tommy put down the binoculars. He glanced at the traffic, waiting for an opening, and then gunned the cruiser through it, driving with one hand. With the other he unfastened the safety strap on his holster. He slammed the cruiser into park at the foot of the sidewalk and jumped out. The boy in the window couldn't have noticed him yet. The boy had his pistol hand extended and was sighting the back of a man walking on the sidewalk below. The scene didn't seem quite real. For all Tommy's recurring sense that much more went on here than naive Northampton knew, it was hard to believe that what this looked like could really be happening on Main Street.

Several weeks before, he had dreamed that he was on a staircase and a suspect pulled a gun on him. It was a familiar dream, one that he believed his mind brought up for a purpose. When he'd had it before, he'd always dodged the bullet. This time he got shot. "That's telling me I'm getting careless," he'd thought. So he'd reviewed street tactics in his mind and done some target shooting. On the perimeter of sleep he had often warned himself against doing the wrong thing at a time like this. Then in his imagination, and in his jail dreams, came lawyers, court, a liberal judge who disliked cops, the view from the inside of a cell, and a funereal, empty feeling that in part he deserved what he was getting, for killing someone he didn't have to kill.

He would give the young man in the window one chance. He'd draw the kid's attention away from the people on the street and toward himself. If the kid in the window turned the pistol Tommy's way, Tommy would have time to duck behind the cruiser and then shoot. He had one hand on his pistol. It was still holstered, but he had his finger on the trigger guard. He put two fingers of his left hand into the corners of his mouth and whistled, a piercing sound he'd learned to make long ago as boss of the O'Connor Detective Agency. Then he bellowed, *"You!"* Up and down the street startled faces turned. The young man turned too. He looked surprised. His mouth fell open. Then, very quickly, he lowered the pistol and pulled his head and torso back inside.

"You get down here *now*!" Tommy yelled toward the window.

The door at street level let into an old wooden staircase. At the top a door opened, and the young man appeared, no longer carrying the gun. "Show me your hands!" Tommy yelled. His face was bright. He bounded up the stairs two steps at a time, grabbed the young man by the arm, and took him back inside the apartment. "Where's the gun?" It lay under a pillow on the sofa. Tommy turned the black pistol over in his hands. A pellet gun. Tommy checked the chamber. It wasn't loaded. He made very sure of that. By now a couple of his patrol officers had arrived. Tommy held the pellet gun in his right hand,

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by his side. He'd bring it back to the station as evidence.

The kid told the other cops that he was a student at the University of Massachusetts. He said, "I was just having some fun."

Tommy's face got redder. "What kind of a moron are you?" he said through his teeth.

"It's just a toy."

In one swift, leather-creaking movement Tommy backed him against the wall. He pressed the barrel of the empty pellet gun against the young man's forehead. *"Does this look real to you? Does this look real to you?"*

He lowered the pistol and took a deep breath. The patrolmen led the boy down the stairs in handcuffs, the make-believe Raskolnikov saying, "I'm a moron. I admit it."

By the time Tommy got back to the station, half a dozen people had come in to report that a man with a gun in a window had threatened to shoot them. Tommy sat down to write his report. He regretted the aftermath then. He shouldn't have put the gun to the student's forehead. It wasn't smart. It wasn't professional. He couldn't remember the last time he had felt so angry. But it was over. It would never happen again. After a while he went back out in the cruiser. There were no bodies on Main Street, no young student slumped over the windowsill above the cleaners, no ice-cream cone melting on the pavement beside a corpse. He wasn't facing an investigation. His world had reassembled. On the corner of Old South and Main a crowd surrounded a belly dancer. A little farther down the block the steel drummer played "Danny Boy." Tommy smiled. "Summertime!" he said.

PEOPLE who spend their lives in one small place don't necessarily grow blind to it. Some natives of a comely place take in its beauties so deeply that the place becomes almost identical with the senses that perceive it. Since marrying Jean, who was geographically adventurous, Tommy had traveled some, on vacation trips. But his journeys were few. He'd never seen the West Coast. He'd never seen New York City, though it was only a four-hour drive away. When he did travel, he carried Northampton with him. If he saw a pretty hillside belonging to another place, or smelled another place's river, he knew those things by contrast and comparison with the hills around Northampton and the great river that made its eastern boundary. These were, for him, reality. And if he woke up somewhere else, on a vacation trip or in the neighboring town where he now lived, and heard a whippoorwill outside (three syllables, the first and last accented: "*Whip*-poor-*weel*, *whip*-poor-*weel*"), he would be transported back to his bedroom on Forbes Avenue. Opening his eyes to the gray daylight in the window and listening to that ancient song, he'd remember himself remembering, "Oh, yeah, oh boy, it's summer." In his mind's eye his frayed shorts lay on the floor, right where he had left them. He'd pull them on, hurry through breakfast, and run out to the street to meet his friends.

In his first years as a cop, when he worked the midnight shift and it was very early in the morning and almost everyone else was still asleep, Tommy would drive west toward the forested part of Northampton—out Ryan Road to West Farms Road, and then up a dirt track toward the top of a hill that he thought of as Turkey Hill. There, deep woods behind and an open vista before him, he'd get out of his patrol car, his coffee cup in hand, and gaze toward Mount Tom, watching the sun rise over a corner of Northampton. He could see some of the town laid out below and imagine the rest, and he felt lordly, watching Northampton emerge from the dark, almost as if he were watching its creation, almost as if it all belonged to him.

From time to time he used to dream Northampton bigger. Years ago, on foot patrol downtown, he'd walk into an alley off Main Street and imagine that a great metropolis lay at the other end. But he knew he was no big-city cop, and, he often told himself, he was better off for that. A lot of those cops spent half their careers doing nothing but traffic work, whereas he dealt with all sorts of crimes and problems. They arose less frequently here than in many places that called themselves cities, but he figured he could work in Northampton for forty years and on the day he retired his successor would still have plenty to do. In the meantime he'd be working in a place where, he often told himself, a cop could make a difference.

It isn't given to many to know a town, a human and a geographic town, as well as Tommy knew Northampton. A state-detective friend, who had never worked a long time in one place, occasionally called Tommy to ask for information about Northampton residents. A certain one had come to his attention. Did Tommy know him? The detective would start laughing as Tommy answered, without a moment's hesitation, "Yup, he's going out with Daisy. Hangs at the information booth. Drives a blue Mustang. You want the license number?" This really was the right size town for him. Working here, he could arrest the person who was selling cocaine to his friend's kid. He could make a gang think twice about colonizing the place, just by taking a youngster's T-shirt.

He was thirty-three years old, and it seemed like an enviable way to spend the next thirty, working in a town he could see entirely and feel he understood, all in one view from the top of Turkey Hill. Tempting from up there to think that he could protect it all, and keep it just as orderly and safe as it had seemed when he was a boy.

Tommy O'Connor moved away from Northampton in February of 1997, to join the FBI. His reasons were complex. They might be summarized by saying that he knew and loved the town so well that he had *to leave it.*

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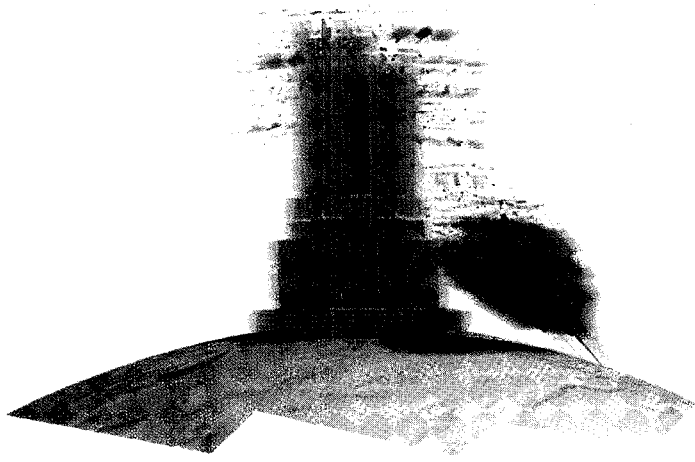
Living in Candlestick Park

by ***JOHN LEWIS GADDIS***



In the twenty-first century geopolitics might well take its metaphors from geology, as the state system of international relations gets shaken to its foundations

THE images that stick in our minds reveal a lot about how we think. Surely the memory most of us retain from the end of the Cold War is that of the Berlin Wall coming down, on November 9, 1989: the toppling of that concrete-block obscenity, to the cheers of ecstatic topplers, seemed to signal a new and more enlighted age. Almost ten years into it, though, enlightenment is hard to find, and other, more disturbing images crowd our minds.

Since the Cold War ended, we have seen victims of genocide being disinterred in Central Europe; African rivers choked with mutilated bodies; armed teenagers ruling Third World cities from the backs of pickup trucks; defeated dictators refusing to accept their own defeat; women forced back into isolation in the name of religion; emigrants clamoring to abandon old cultures for new ones they know only from television; terrorism striking with deadly efficiency where one might least expect it—in the American heartland. It is enough to evoke a certain nostalgia for the old world order. The new one, as the French author Philippe Delmas points out, contains far too many people who are prepared "to turn around and disembowel one another over an acre of land, a hamlet, or some ancient totem."

What happened? How did patterns of behavior that most of us had thought buried in the past suddenly become our future? It might help, in explaining these unpleasant surprises, to retrieve a different image from the year 1989. The date was October 17, the time 5:04 P.M. Pacific Daylight, the place San Francisco's Candlestick Park. The Oakland Athletics and the San Francisco Giants were about to begin the third game of the World Series when a distant rumbling suddenly became an uncomfortable shaking, and the great Loma Prieta earthquake proceeded to pre-empt everything planned for that afternoon and for some time to come. Television cameras, before they were knocked off the air,

Illustrations by Mirko Ilić

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caught the astonishment on the faces of players, fans, and anchorpersons alike as they abruptly acquired a Shakespearean insight: that there were more things in heaven and earth than had been dreamt of—or at least adequately taken into account—in their philosophy.

GAMES and the settings in which games are played are very different things. The Cold War once seemed a matter of life and death; but as the years rolled by and the Apocalypse did not arrive, it took on the character of a latter-day "great game," reminiscent of the long nineteenth-century conflict between the British and the Russians in Asia, which never quite produced a great war. Even the language of the Cold War became that of games: policymakers warned gravely of falling dominoes; theorists built billiard-ball models of world politics; critics of détente complained that the Soviet Union was playing chess while the most the Americans were managing was checkers. And in the end—whatever Washington's ineptitude at chess—the West somehow "won."

Implicit in all these metaphors was an important assumption: that however intense the rivalry, no one was going to hurl the checkers and chess pieces to the floor, or run off with the dominoes, or rip the billiard table's fabric down the middle. Whatever the game might be, the playing field would remain level. No earthquakes were anticipated. Even a nuclear war, a few strategists once thought, might be fought within certain "rules of the game," and an entire discipline—game theory—grew out of efforts to discover what those rules might be.

The end of the Cold War was an earthquakelike event that revealed hidden sources of geopolitical strain. These forces threaten the stability of *all* great powers. As the shakiest, the Soviet Union was just the first to go.

Today, though, the metaphors have shifted: geopoliticians sound more like geologists than like game theorists. The political scientist Samuel P. Huntington warns of "fault line conflicts" in which clashes of civilizations are bound to occur. The economist Lester C. Thurow sees "tectonic plates" colliding, with unpredictable consequences. The journalist Robert D. Kaplan predicts that seismic shocks will result from demographic and ecological pressures: "Though the havoc is unanticipated, stresses that build up gradually over the years cause the layers of crust to shift suddenly."

This new "tectonic" geopolitics suggests the need to rethink an old conflict. The Soviet-American "great game," it now appears, was taking place all along within an international system—in effect, an arena—whose stability we should not have taken for granted. Reminiscent of the teams at Candlestick Park, the Cold War superpowers competed even as historical processes of which they were only dimly aware were determining their future. It took the upheavals of 1989 to reveal these: to make it clear that the old rules, even the old games, may no longer apply.

Very Big News

WHEN geologists want to know the future, they look at the past: at the record of forces operating beneath the earth's crust that drive everything from the imperceptibly slow drifting of continents to the fault-line slips that cause catastrophic earthquakes. This method assumes—safely enough, it would seem—that processes in motion for millions of years are not about to disappear or reverse themselves overnight. Geologists still cannot say just where or exactly when a fault will give way. But that it will, sooner or later, is as certain as anything on this planet can be.

The end of the Cold War was an earthquakelike event in that it revealed deep and hitherto hidden sources of geopolitical strain. As is often the case in geology, though, it has taken a while to map these, and to find the faults they have produced. First impressions were that the critical fracture lay between democracy and capitalism on the one hand, and authoritarianism on the other. The Soviet Union collapsed, according to this view, because it was unable to feed or free its people at a time when prosperity and liberty had become normal for most of the rest of the developed world. Kremlin leaders found themselves in a classic Catch-22: their country could save itself only by ceasing to be what it was.

But this geopolitical map implied that democratization and marketization proceed in the same direction—that no fault exists between *them*. If that were indeed the case, the disappearance of Soviet authoritarianism should have produced a stable post–Cold War landscape—one in which the United States, which has sought a world safe for democra-

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cy and capitalism since at least the days of Woodrow Wilson, should be relatively comfortable. This has not happened, though. The aftershocks are continuing, and few Americans—or others, for that matter—feel at ease among them. So perhaps larger fractures lie elsewhere.

The tremors originate, some geopoliticians now believe, along a deeper fault, which separates processes of economic globalization and political fragmentation that began well before the Cold War and are sure to survive it. Ian Clark, of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, explains "globalization" as "integration, interdependence, multilateralism, openness, and interpenetration." "Fragmentation," conversely, involves "disintegration, autarchy, unilateralism, . . . separatism, and heterogeneity." What is unsettling about this geopolitical map is that the fault it traces could be threatening the stability of *all* great powers. As the shakiest among them, the Soviet Union would simply have been the first to go.

States justify their existence, in large part, by securing their citizens' well-being, whether by creating and maintaining jobs, providing a social safety net, or protecting the environment. A regime that must leave its people at the mercy of market forces is not likely to enhance its reputation in their eyes. And yet globalization requires placing national economies within an inherently unpredictable international marketplace. When corporations can base themselves anywhere, when capital crosses boundaries as easily as birds do, when communication takes place at the speed of light and at virtually no cost, governments have little choice but to learn to live with invisible hands. A laissez-faire economic system is emerging at the global level a century after the invention of the welfare state limited laissez-faire economics at the national level. The social and political compromises that saved capitalism through an expansion of state authority early in the twentieth century no longer constrain it. And states now are as ill positioned as towns and villages were then to resist the buffeting of markets, or to relieve the dislocations they can produce.

Meanwhile, political fragmentation, by proliferating sovereignties, is diminishing sovereignty. It was easy to applaud the formation of new states when the result was to break up the old European colonial empires, or to bring down the former Soviet Union. But the process has not stopped there. Democracies, too, are feeling the centrifugal forces of separatism, as the Canadians, the British, the Spanish, the Belgians, and the Italians can testify. Indeed, with their respect for the principle of self-determination, democracies may be particularly vulnerable to such pressures. How many of them today would follow the American example and fight a blood-drenched civil war to deny some portion of their own citizenry the right to secede? And yet can we assume—with examples like Chechnya and the former Yugoslavia in mind—that secessions will always promote peace and justice? In a world of weaker states politics could become as volatile and indifferent as economics already is.

Thus states are getting hit from both sides: whether as the result of global economic trends or of particularist political pressures, their authority is diminishing. Since the prevailing view throughout most of this century has been that the power of states was increasing, this is very big news indeed. It is roughly the equivalent of finding that the San Andreas fault runs right under one's house. Confronted with such information, one would want to try, at a minimum, to understand the tectonics involved, to anticipate the damage when the fault finally slips, and to take whatever precautions might be possible now to shore up foundations, reinforce walls, and stabilize crockery.

The Origins of the State

STATES as we know them date back only about five centuries. Other ways of organizing human affairs existed prior to that time: monarchies, principalities, cities, clans, tribes. None, however, possessed the modern state's defining attribute, which is its claim—not always achieved—to monopolize the means of violence. Accomplishing that may not sound like progress, but consider the alternative: a world with the instruments of coercion shared among predatory warlords, roving mercenaries, invading hordes, urban gangs, bandits, and pirates. That is what the pre-state era often was like, and it was to provide some semblance of security from the prevailing disorder that states originated.

They certainly did not produce peace. But the organized wars of the eighteenth century were a distinct improvement over what had preceded them—notably the Thirty Years' War, of 1618–1648, "an anarchic free-for-all of violently changing fortunes," as the historian David Kaiser has described it, which may have reduced Germany's population by as much as half. When, therefore, the early-nineteenth-century Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz wrote that war was an extension of policy by other means, he was not so much glorifying war as reacting against its excesses. Having lived through, and fought in, the Napoleonic Wars, he had every reason to know what the unconstrained use of force might involve.

Clausewitz insisted on the *control* of military conflict: on limiting violence to the minimum necessary to achieve belligerents' objectives. He was sensitive, as few other strategists have been, to war's unpredictabilities. He knew how easily terror, fatigue, and friction can frustrate even the most sophisticated planning. But this fear of chaos—of losing control—made all the more compelling Clause-

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witz's insistence that the initiation and conduct of war should be rational acts, in the sense of maintaining as close a correspondence as possible between the purposes of violence and its scale.

Subsequent wars, especially the two world wars, did not always meet that standard: hence their conduct has often been criticized from a Clausewitzian perspective. But those who started them sought to link available force with intended objectives. "Statesmen have sometimes been surprised by the nature of the war they have unleashed," Sir Michael Howard, one of the most astute students of Clausewitz, has pointed out, "and it is reasonable to assume that in at least fifty per cent of the cases they got a result they did not expect. But that is not the same as a war begun by mistake and continued with no political purpose."

The Cold War, in contrast, was Clausewitzian to the core. With the development of nuclear weapons, the means of violence had swollen to unimaginable proportions; but the great powers maintained such tight control that none resorted to any of those devices. Confronted with the possibility of their use, leaders as dissimilar as Eisenhower, Khrushchev, Macmillan, De Gaulle, and Mao Zedong found common ground in the urgency of living to play the game another day. Clausewitz's insistence that the instruments of violence not overwhelm the uses to which they are put has served us well, therefore. We probably owe our survival to it.

States will not be as powerful as they have been. Since the view throughout most of this century has been that the power of states was increasing, this is the equivalent of finding that the San Andreas fault runs under one's house.

Cold War statesmen behaved so rationally, in fact, that theorists today rely heavily on "rational choice" models in thinking about the future. "Realists" and "neo-realists" assume that states know their interests and will consistently pursue them; a few have even advocated the controlled proliferation of nuclear weapons, apparently on the grounds that if these weapons induced rationality during the Cold War, they will do so at all times and in all places. Political economists, assuming aggregate if not individual rationality, are confident that states contemplating war in a globally interdependent economy will find that they cannot afford it. Democratic peace theory, too, takes rationality as a given. The argument here is that since no democracy has ever gone to war with another democracy, such states must prefer and will therefore choose peaceful over violent means of resolving disputes with each other. The number of democracies is increasing; so, too, should the prospects for peace.

Game theorists have even devised a mathematical concept to simulate these patterns of behavior, and its name is revealing: expected utility. The assumption, quite simply, is that people act only when they anticipate benefits from their actions. And given existing military, economic, and political realities, it is hard to see—from a rational-choice perspective, at least—how starting a war could benefit anyone in this day and age.

A Tenacious Affinity for Killing

BUT what if behavior is *not* always rational? What if there are deeper forces—rooted in the structure of international politics, or in the cultures that populate the world, or in human nature itself—that get in the way of calculating expected utility? What if, in assuming rationality, we are continuing to play an old game even as we feel the earth beginning to shake beneath our feet?

Rational-choice scenarios, it is worth noting, assume the continued viability of states. Theorists who favor proliferating nuclear weapons expect them to remain under national authority: no one would want to pass them out to the Aum Shinrikyo cult, or the Montana militia, or some brilliant Unabomberlike loner. Businessmen look to states for the order within which commerce can flourish and contracts can be enforced; there is no rush these days to invest in places like Somalia or Sierra Leone, where such conditions are absent. Democracy could hardly survive if the constitutional protections that states provide were to vanish. If the spread of democracy promotes peace, therefore, that condition, too, requires that states survive and prosper.

Perhaps they will. States are not likely to disappear in the near future, and it is reasonable to expect that they will still be around in some form when the twenty-first century ends. The question is, In *what* form? Even rational-choice enthusiasts agree that states will not be as powerful as they have been—that in contrast to the Orwellian nightmares that haunted much of this century, wide areas of human activity in the next one will lie beyond state control. The effects will in some ways be liberating, because

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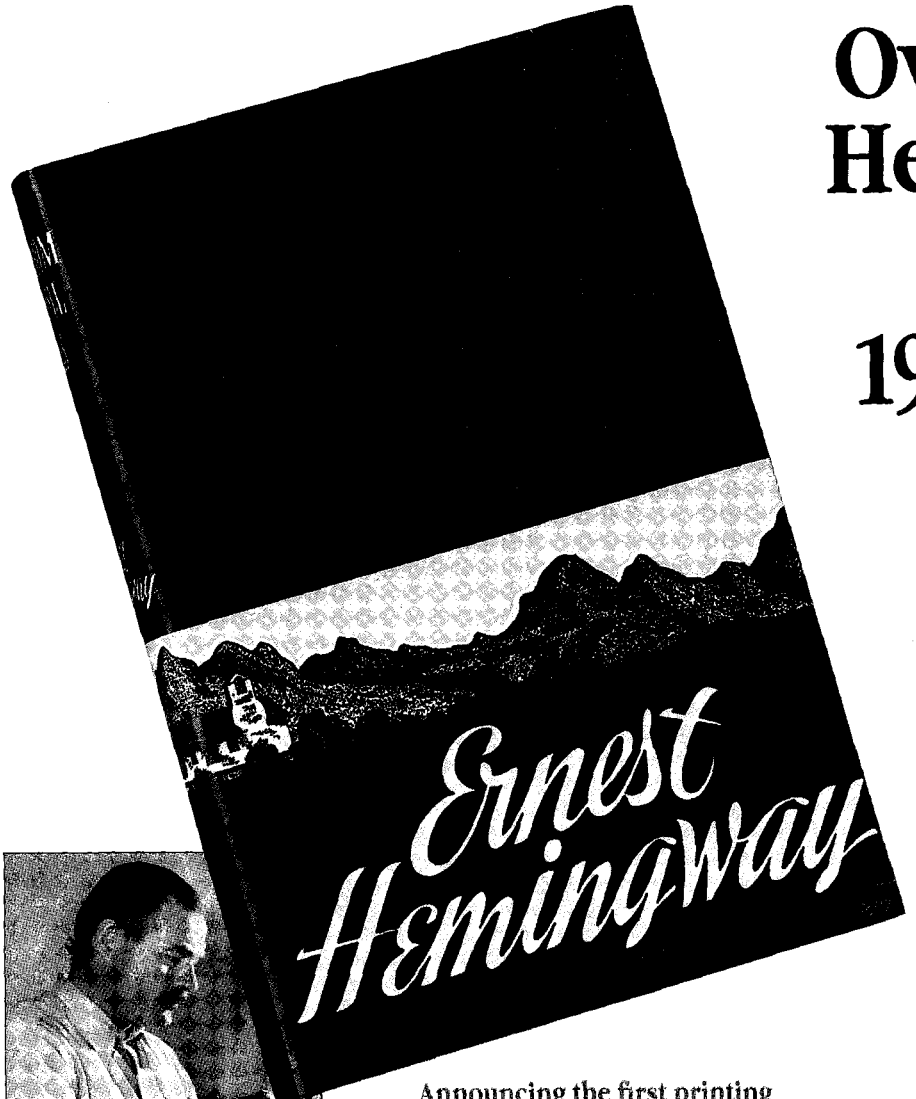

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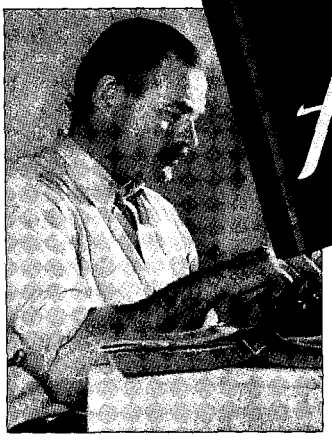

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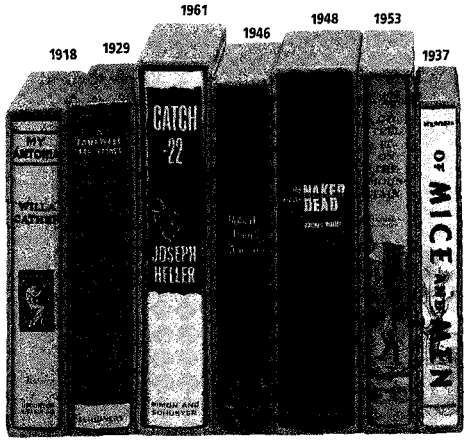

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states have so often been sources of oppression. But they have also brought stability, and that stability could be the precondition for such rational choices as human beings have made in managing violence over the past several hundred years.

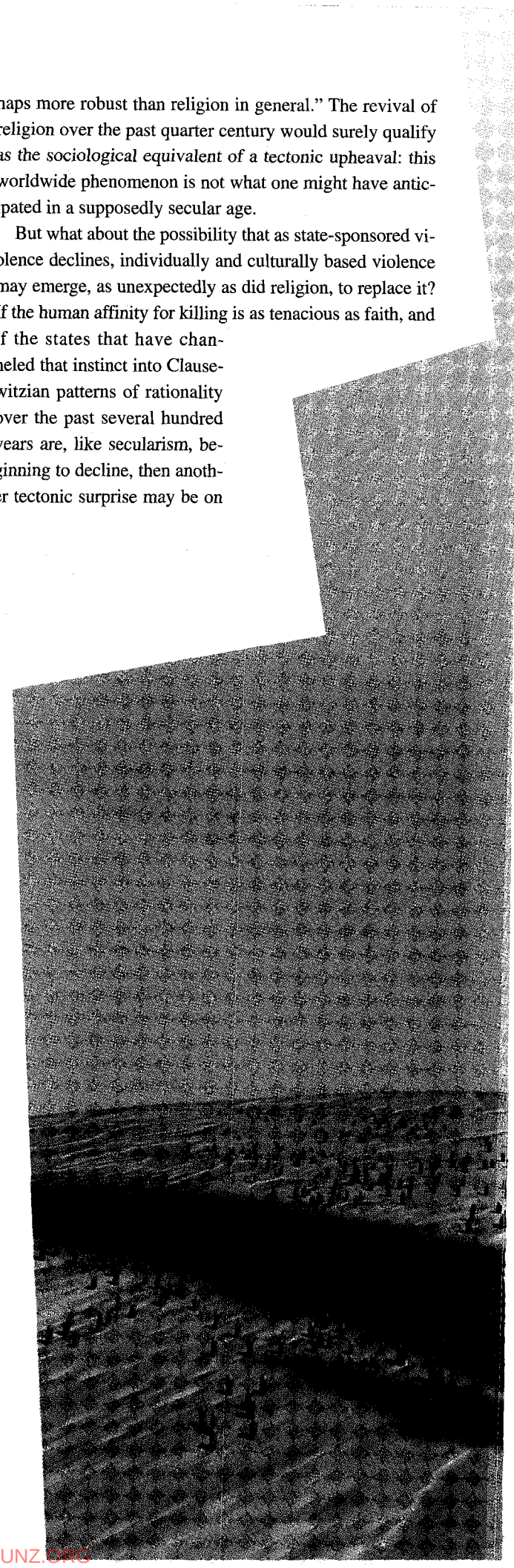
One way to test that hypothesis would be to examine the geopolitical tectonics: to look at how wars were waged in the medieval, ancient, and even prehistoric eras, before states existed. Military historians are doing just that, and what they have found is causing some of them to question the relevance of Clausewitz to the post–Cold War world. John Keegan, whose writings have revolutionized the field, makes the argument most bluntly: "War is not the continuation of policy by other means. . . . Warfare is almost as old as man himself, and reaches into the most secret places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king." The Clausewitzian view of war, the Israeli historian Martin van Creveld says, "is . . . a modern invention. . . . Having been invented at a certain point in time, there is no reason to think that it possesses some kind of inherent validity, nor that it necessarily has a great future."

These experts are suggesting that if rationality does indeed mean matching the scale of violence to its purposes, then it is not clear who or what in a world of weaker states would perform that function. The historical indicators are not encouraging. For a thousand years following the fall of Rome, Van Creveld points out, "armed conflict was waged by . . . barbarian tribes, the Church, feudal barons of every rank, free cities, even private individuals." To view such wars as Clausewitzian makes no sense, for they were "scarcely . . . distinguishable from simple rapine and murder." Primitive society was no better: as the anthropologist Lawrence H. Keeley has shown, there were few if any "peaceful savages."

It is too deterministic to say that people are programmed for violence, like some aggressive species of ants. But the archaeological evidence shows that men—and often women as well—have been fighting wars for at least 5,000 years. Organized conflict emerged independently in cultures that had little or no contact with one another. It appears to have been as frequent among the inhabitants of pre-conquest North and South America as in Europe, Asia, and Africa. And collective killing goes back much further than that. It evolved initially, the social critic Barbara Ehrenreich argues in *Blood Rites*, as a defense against being eaten by wild animals at a time when our precursors as a species were themselves making the transition from prey to predator.

If this is true, if violence is that deeply embedded in human nature, then it must be at least as ancient as is the belief in the supernatural. "War appears to be far more robust than any particular religion," Ehrenreich observes, "perhaps more robust than religion in general." The revival of religion over the past quarter century would surely qualify as the sociological equivalent of a tectonic upheaval: this worldwide phenomenon is not what one might have anticipated in a supposedly secular age.

But what about the possibility that as state-sponsored violence declines, individually and culturally based violence may emerge, as unexpectedly as did religion, to replace it? If the human affinity for killing is as tenacious as faith, and if the states that have channeled that instinct into Clausewitzian patterns of rationality over the past several hundred years are, like secularism, beginning to decline, then another tectonic surprise may be on



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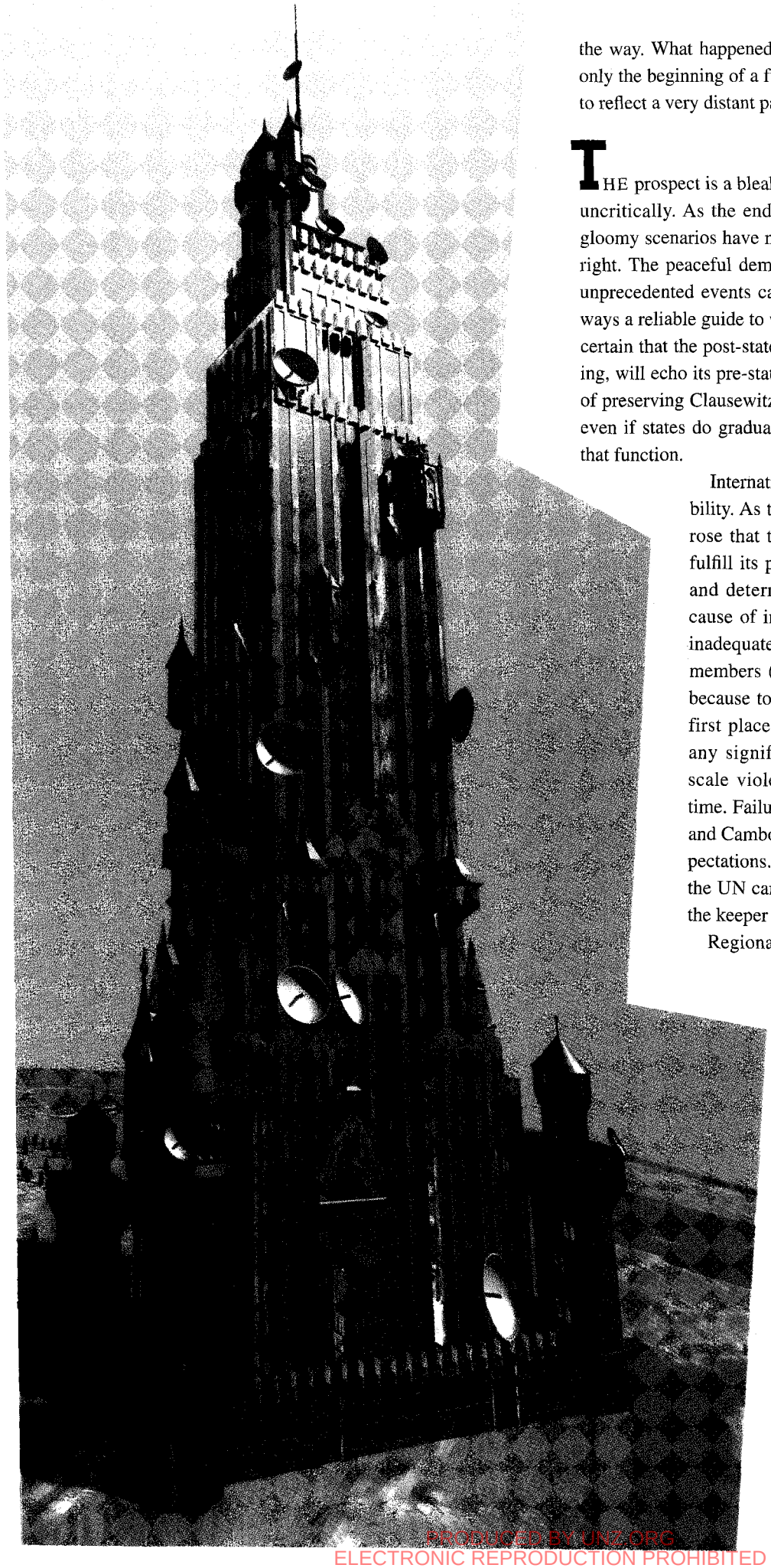

the way. What happened in Bosnia and Rwanda could be only the beginning of a future that turns out, as in geology, to reflect a very distant past.

THE prospect is a bleak one, and we should not accept it uncritically. As the end of the Cold War demonstrated, gloomy scenarios have no monopoly on getting the future right. The peaceful demise of a superpower showed that unprecedented events can occur—that the past is not always a reliable guide to what is to come. It is by no means certain that the post-state era, if that is what we are entering, will echo its pre-state counterpart; there may be ways of preserving Clausewitzian rationality "by other means," even if states do gradually lose their capacity to perform that function.

International organizations are one possibility. As the Cold War wound down, hopes rose that the United Nations would at last fulfill its promise in resolving old conflicts and deterring new ones. But whether because of ineffective leadership, because of inadequate support from its most powerful members (especially the United States), or because too much was expected of it in the first place, the UN has yet to demonstrate any significant capacity to control large-scale violence over an extended period of time. Failures like those in Bosnia, Somalia, and Cambodia have forced a lowering of expectations. We have a long way to go before the UN can plausibly substitute for states as the keeper of Clausewitzian order.

Regional organizations are more robust, but their priorities are narrow. Even as it expands, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization concerns itself more with exclusion than inclusion. Keeping Russia out seems particularly at odds with the universally acclaimed example set by post–Second World War security structures, which brought Germany and Japan in. The European Union's priorities look equally askew: is creating a common currency really more vital than removing the economic disparities that divide Europe today almost as dramatically as did the old Iron

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Curtain? In the Asia-Pacific region, where cooperative action failed to prevent an economic crash, pressures are building for a return to controlled markets. Controlled politics have never disappeared there.

Meanwhile, the majority of the world's population remains saddled with economic systems that have failed, or never took off in the first place. But the telecommunications revolution—which functions in all societies—is making these have-nots more aware than ever of what they do not have, even as demographic pressures and ecological deterioration endanger the little they still possess. If, as the historian Paul Kennedy has warned, "the continued abuse of the developing world's environment leads to global warming, or if there is a massive flood of economic refugees from the poorer to the richer parts of the world, everyone will suffer." No transnational institution, governmental or nongovernmental, has even begun to address this problem, despite its potential as the greatest of all breeding grounds for violence in the twenty-first century.

For all their good intentions and often impressive accomplishments, international organizations have a common problem: it is that of collective leadership commanding limited resources. As Clausewitz could have pointed out, restraining violence, like unleashing it, requires both capabilities and resolve; these are hard to achieve when many are in charge and the instruments at hand are few. Transnational institutions, then, face their own Catch-22. They may someday be in a position to counter the decline of states and the disorder that will probably follow. But like the old Soviet Union, they will accomplish this task only by ceasing to be what they now are.

IF the institutional approach seems unpromising, what about the opposite end of the spectrum: a change in the behavior of individuals, so that there would be less violence for states—or their successors—to restrain in the first place? The idea is not as far-fetched as it might seem. We are, after all, creatures of evolution, and our survival suggests at least limited success in moderating self-destructive tendencies. Violence is not the only characteristic of our character—and character itself can change.

The political scientist James Q. Wilson has pointed out that regardless of culture, region, or religious belief, most

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PIANO

It must have been Lisa's voice
since Piano was waiting when we got there,
the bay doors barely open and her white
face running the bars along her stall.
Then Lisa brought her out into the hall
to brush her down in order to show
the wood sheen under the dust and how
the tension of the body, if she stood
still long enough, could make her look
like she was floating standing. And given
time, in the broken bird light falling
from the loft, she seemed to float,
nodding and letting her neck, a third
of all of her, bend to the floor,
where she swept, with little breaths,
each loose and useless piece until
she found the somewhere solid that
she wanted, striking the heavy air
to let us know, marking the place
to tell us, in a second, she could fly.
Her body had already started to shine,
but it was her blaze that gave her eyes
their depth against the touch and Lisa's soft talk.
And it was the eyes that sometimes flared
against the words. Lisa said she was wild
because she was young. And bored, too,
when she couldn't get out, yet never bored
the way some horses dance from side to side,
spelling their weight, pressing their radiant,
stalled foreheads into the walls, or the way
some horses disappear inside, having
drawn and redrawn circles. The barn was
full of the noise and silences of horses.
And filled with Lisa's voice in counter-
point: and Lisa's horse's stillnesses—
like love or what love's moment's stillness
really is, hands-high, and restless.

—STANLEY PLUMLY

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people today would agree on what constitutes an atrocity—there is a nearly universal sense of horror. Shifts in standards of behavior must have produced this consensus, for it cannot always have been present: societies that once tolerated human sacrifice and slavery, for example, no longer do so. With the twentieth century's quantum leap in the speed and ubiquity of communication, this shared moral sense seems likely to expand.

Political behavior, too, may be changing. The political scientist Francis Fukuyama detects a gradual but irreversible trend toward self-government and away from the old tradition of authority by imposition. The proliferation of democracies, he insists, arises out of a long-term change in human collective consciousness. And the political scientist John Mueller has made the case that attitudes toward war itself are evolving: that in light of the devastation twentieth-century conflicts have caused, the very idea of fighting a war in the twenty-first century—among the great powers, at least—will attract more ridicule than respect.

If these trends hold up, we will face some interesting possibilities. New patterns of behavior may evolve in time and with sufficient strength to compensate for the decline of states and the probable ineffectiveness of international organizations. One tectonic force could counter another. Scientists have found that under certain circumstances even inanimate objects—molecules, crystals, representations of randomness on a computer screen—have the capacity for self-organization. If some similar phenomenon could work in the world of geopolitics—if we could "self-organize" rationality without having to rely on states or international institutions to enforce it—then the prospects for the next century would be a good deal better than one might think.

Will Empires Return?

THERE is, however, another, darker path to order in a disorderly world that few people today want to talk about: "empire" is the form of governance that hardly dares speak its name. Surely, it would seem, we are living in a post-imperial age. European colonial empires have long since crumbled; and even though Soviet and American spheres of influence took on imperial attributes during the Cold War, those structures, too, are mostly part of the past. If economic integration and political self-determination are eroding the authority of states, then these forces ought to be all the more destabilizing for empires, founded as they so often were on the denial of just those principles.

And yet—a geologist would caution that before we consider volcanoes extinct, or faults stable, we should check the underlying tectonics. After all, states have existed for roughly 500 years, but empires—like war—go back almost ten times as long. What assurance do we have that our epoch, which is clearly one of inactive empires, is also the one uniquely privileged to witness the end of empires for all time?

None whatever, if science fiction is any guide. Perhaps it should be, since novelists and filmmakers spend at least as much time as anyone else relating past and present trends to the long-term future. Empires have hardly disappeared from their imagined worlds; indeed, they show up so frequently—in everything from Isaac Asimov's classic *Foundation* series to George Lucas's hugely popular *Star Wars* sagas—that it is hard to imagine the genre without them. Viewing the future through Darth Vader's eyes may seem, well, slightly flaky. But to anyone who failed to understand the purpose, so would the sight of miners carrying canaries into mine shafts. Early-warning systems must be both impressionable and expressive—and false alarms by no means render them useless. For these reasons alone we should not too quickly rule out a future for empires.

Empire is the form of governance that hardly dares speak its name. What assurance do we have that our epoch, which is one of inactive empires, is the one uniquely privileged to witness the end of empires for all time? None whatever.

The historical record here supports the visionaries. No empire has endured, but cycles of imperial consolidation and decline—the rise and fall of empires—are one of the few persistent patterns in history. Astronomers know that stars are constantly igniting and burning themselves out. The fact that none ultimately survive is no reason to regard the process that produces them as extinct—or as irrelevant to the future. Empires, on this planet at least, appear and disappear in much the same way.

What is it, then, that causes them to do so? The arrogance of ambitious leaders, to be sure: Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and Hitler built empires—and quickly lost them—through the force of personality. But such instances

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are relatively rare. Empires have more often arisen from a determination to spread a religion or an ideology, or out of hope for economic gain, or as a response to the prospect of anarchy along one's borders. The first two inducements may be obsolete: in an age of global communication and markets, empires are hardly necessary to disseminate ideas or secure profits. But empires as a method of imposing order—that is another matter entirely.

For all their injustices, empires have frequently achieved a kind of Clausewitzian rationality. Like states, they have sought to monopolize the means of violence; and because their purposes paralleled one another, empires and states coexisted for several hundred years. Some states, like England and France, transformed themselves into empires; certain empires, like those of the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans, spawned new states. But as democracy spread in the twentieth century, the priorities of empires and states began to diverge.

The democratic state must assume—even if it does not in every respect ensure—the equality of those subject to its rule. Empires, in contrast, require inequality: a powerful center asserts its authority over weaker peripheries, at times with their consent, more often without it. That is why, as this "democratic" century ends, there are no traditional empires left. Some of the processes that produced them remain in place, though, and that raises an interesting question about the next century: Is equality or inequality likely to be the dominant theme?

An answer is already emerging, and it is not reassuring. The new laissez-faire economics is distributing wealth in an unprecedentedly unequal manner throughout the world. That, Karl Marx would have said, is what one would expect from capitalism; he expected an international proletarian revolution as a consequence. States proved him wrong by cushioning capitalism's excesses during the twentieth century; had they not done so, the democratization that dominates our era could hardly have taken hold. How will democracy fare, though, if the twenty-first century is one of increasing economic inequality and diminishing state authority?

Suppose Marx should turn out to have been right after all. Suppose unregulated capitalism provokes discontent on a global scale similar to what happened within the industrialized states a century ago. Suppose the anarchy Robert D. Kaplan anticipates in the poorer parts of the world spreads widely enough to alarm the richer parts. Not states as presently constituted, or international organizations, or whatever slow shifts may be taking place in human nature, are likely by themselves to contain such chaos. Empires, however, are a time-tested response to inequality and the unrest it brings—and the human capacity to package old wine in new bottles (equipped, of course, with politically correct labels) ought never to be underestimated.

Incompatible Virtues

WHATEVER the packaging, the advertising will sound familiar: that without stability—without some method of countering the human propensity for violence—the prospects for advancing civilization are at risk. The argument has been made so often, and in support of such dubious causes, that we tend to dismiss it as special pleading—as an excuse, however feeble, for aggression, exploitation, or discrimination. It seems a relic of an earlier age. We like to think that we are beyond the need for hierarchy and all it implies.

But this perspective, too, may reflect a failure to think tectonically. For it is not at all clear that the two great priorities of twentieth-century democratic capitalism—economic integration and political self-determination—will alone produce a better world. If, as appears increasingly likely, these undeniable virtues do not always complement each other, if the simultaneous pursuit of both means straddling a fault line, then seismic shocks are sure to come. And it would be arrogant in the extreme to assume that the past, which has witnessed so many upheavals, can offer no useful guidance in preparing for them.

Sir Isaiah Berlin, one of the wisest men of this century, often warned that values are not necessarily compatible: that the simple-minded pursuit of single virtues can subvert others. The essence of politics is the balancing of priorities, and this requires an ecological perspective—a sense of the whole, along with a sensitivity to how things relate to one another. That is what seems to be missing as we approach the twenty-first century: the willingness to say that there can be too much of any good thing, that setting up self-determination, or free trade, or anything else, as an absolute priority is asking for trouble. It is like preparing for earthquakes only by stabilizing crockery, without worrying about the shelves, walls, roof, and foundation.

With the plate-tectonics revolution three decades ago, geology became an ecological discipline. It was possible for the first time to visualize the earth as a whole, and to understand how processes at work in some part of it could affect the rest. Geopolitics requires a similarly comprehensive perspective: we need to focus our attention as much on the arenas within which games are played as on the games themselves. We are no more likely than the geologists to predict precise outcomes. But we can at least prepare ourselves for Candlestick Park surprises: we can reinforce the bleachers, back up the communications links, mark the exits, and keep the emergency squad close at hand. We may even find a certain satisfaction—players, fans, and anchorpersons alike—in expanding our philosophy, and hence our dreams, to accommodate more of the things that are happening, if not in heaven then at least here on earth.

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WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?

by JANE KENYON

One morning after the Crucifixion, Mary Magdalene came to see the body of Christ. She found the stone rolled away from an empty tomb. Two figures dressed in white asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

"Because," she replied, "they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Returned from long travel, I sit
in the familiar, sun-streaked pew, waiting
for the bread and wine of holy Communion.
The old comfort does not rise in me, only
apathy and bafflement.
India, with her ceaseless
bells and fire, her crows calling stridently
all night; India with her sandalwood
smoke, and graceful gods, many-headed and many-
armed, has taken away the one who blessed
and kept me.
The thing is done, as surely
as if my luggage had been stolen from the train.

Men and women with faces as calm as lakes at dusk
have taken away my Lord, and I don't know
where to find him.

What is Brahman? I don't know Brahman.
I don't know *saccidandana*, the bliss
of the absolute and unknowable.
I only know that I have lost the Lord
in whose image I was made.

Whom shall I thank for this pear,
sweet and white? Food *is* God, *prasadam*,
God's mercy. But who is this God?
The one who is *not this*, *not that*?

The absurdity of all religious forms
breaks over me, as the absurdity of language
made me feel faint the day I heard friends
giving commands to their neighbor's dog
in Spanish. . . . At first I laughed,
but then I became frightened.

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They have taken away my Lord, a person
whose life I held inside me. I saw him
heal, and teach, and eat among sinners.
I saw him break the sabbath to make a higher
sabbath. I saw him lose his temper.

I knew his anguish when he called, "I thirst!,"
and received vinegar to drink. The Bible
does not say it, but I am sure he turned
his head away. Not long after he cried, "My God,
my God, why have you forsaken me?,"

I watched him reveal himself risen
to Magdalene with a single word: "Mary!"

It was my habit to speak to him. His goodness
perfumed my life. I loved the Lord, he heard
my cry, and he loved me as his own.

A man sleeps on the pavement, on a raffia mat—
the only thing that has not been stolen from him.
This stranger who loves what cannot be understood
has put out my light with his calm face.

Shall the fire answer my fears and vapors?
The fire cares nothing for my illness,
nor does Brahma, the creator, nor Shiva who sees
evil with his terrible third eye; Vishnu,
the protector, does not protect me.

I've brought home the smell of the streets
in the folds of soft, bright cotton garments.
When I iron them the steam brings back
the complex odors that rise from the gutters,
of tuberoses, urine, dust, joss, and death.

On a curb in Allahabad the family gathers
under a dusty tree, a few quilts hung
between light posts and a wattle fence
for privacy. Eleven sit or lie around the fire
while a woman of sixty stirs a huge pot.
Rice cooks in a narrow-necked crock
on the embers. A small dog, with patches of bald,
red skin on his back, lies on the corner
of the piece of canvas that serves as flooring.

Looking at them I lose my place.
I don't know why I was born, or why
I live in a house in New England, or why I am
a visitor with heavy luggage giving lectures
for the State Department. Why am I not
tap-tapping with my fingernail
on the rolled-up window of a white government car,
a baby in my arms, drugged to look feverish?

Rajiv did not weep. He did not cover
his face with his hands when we rowed past
the dead body of a newborn nudging the grassy
banks at Benares—close by a snake
rearing up, and a cast-off garland of flowers.

He explained. When a family are too poor
to cremate their dead, they bring the body
here, and slip it into the waters of the Ganges
and Yamuna Rivers.
Perhaps the child was dead
at birth; perhaps it had the misfortune
to be born a girl. The mother may have walked
two days with her baby's body to this place
where Gandhi's ashes once struck the waves
with a sound like gravel being scuffed
over the edge of a bridge.

"What shall we do about this?" I asked
my God, who even then was leaving me. The reply
was scorching wind, lapping of water, pull
of the black oarsmen on the oars. . . .

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Confucius and the Scholars

by CHARLOTTE ALLEN

East Asian technocrats and modernists in Beijing, among others, are eagerly embracing an updated Confucianism—even as scholars in the West ask some eyebrow-raising questions. Did the Chinese sage really exist? If so, did he have much to do with the religious and ethical system that bears his name? Could Confucianism have been invented by Jesuit missionaries?

TO MANY EDUCATED WESTERNERS, CONFUCIUS is the very emblem of Chinese civilization and religious belief. If the dates that historians have assigned to him—551–479 B.C.—are correct, he was a contemporary of the Greek poet Pindar, the tragedian Aeschylus, and the philosopher Heraclitus. According to tradition, Confucius was easily their equal. In addition to having written or edited parts of a diverse body of literature that includes the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*) and the *Book of Poems*, classics to this day, he was a scholar, a minister of state, and an accomplished horseman and archer. Confucius is said to have taught his disciples the cultivation of personal virtue (*ren*, usually translated as "goodness" or "humaneness"), veneration of one's parents, love of learning, loyalty to one's superiors, kindness to one's subordinates, and a high regard for all of the customs, institutions, and rituals that make for civility.

So appealing is Confucius that his *Lunyu*, or *Analects*, a collection of 497 sayings and short dialogues written down by his disciples after his death, has been translated again and again, especially during this century. Ezra Pound tried his hand at the manuscript; Arthur Waley published a famous English translation in 1938; and two years ago Simon Leys (the pen name of the Australian Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans) translated it into strikingly spare and elegant English prose. One reason Confucius has resonated with twentieth-century intellectuals is that his religiosity—or lack thereof—is remarkably congruent with our time. He appeared to encourage obedience to the will of "heaven" and reverent observance of religious rites—the ancient Chinese practice of offering sacrifices to the spirits of one's ancestors, for example—while remaining agnostic on the question of whether a supernatural world actually exists. One of the analects declares (in Leys's translation), "The Master never talked of: miracles; violence; disorders; spirits." The *Analects* contains a version of the Golden Rule ("I would not want to do to others what I do not want them to do to me"), but Confucius' real concern seems to have been the Golden Mean: all things in moderation, even moderation itself. According to another of the analects, "Lord Ji Wen thought thrice before acting. Hearing this, the Master said: 'Twice is enough.'" Such anecdotes prompted the novelist Elias Canetti to observe, "The *Analects* of Confucius are the oldest complete intellectual and spiritual portrait of a man. It strikes one as a modern book."

In short, ever since the Enlightenment, Confucius has been widely regarded in the West as a Chinese personification of humane, tolerant, and universal ethical principles. In his *Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine listed Confucius with Jesus and the Greek philosophers as the world's great moral teachers. A figure of Confucius in flowing sleeves joins Moses, Hammurabi, and Solon among the lawgivers in the marble frieze encircling the Supreme Court's hearing room in Washington, D.C.

But what if this familiar image is completely untrue? The answer to this question is of more than academic signif-

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icance. The portrait of Confucius as the leading Chinese sage, together with the traditional holistic and moralistic reading of the *Analects* that Leys's translation exemplifies, has an important ideological constituency: intellectuals of the Chinese diaspora and their Western admirers, who have used Confucianism to assert a non-Maoist but thoroughly Chinese identity. For several decades these self-described New Confucians—a group consisting mostly of university professors—have been promoting "Confucian values" as the driving force of the non-Communist Chinese cultures of East Asia. Behind the recent economic boom in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and elsewhere, they contend, lay a "Confucian ethic" of respect for family, hard work, and the social order equivalent to the Protestant ethic that Max Weber postulated as being responsible for the rise of capitalism in Northern Europe. The New Confucians have been promoting an updated Confucianism—minus such atavistic features as the ancestor cult and an offhand attitude toward women—as the underpinnings of both the human-rights movement in China and a communitarian version of modernity that affords individual liberty without encouraging the libertine excesses that, as they see it, plague America and Europe. If the New Confucians are wrong about Confucius—if, that is, he never was the humane sage and ethicist of popular imagination, and Confucianism as commonly perceived is largely a mythical concoction—their theories and platform would suddenly rest on a shakier base.

THAT is precisely the premise of a new strain of Confucian scholarship that has stirred excitement and controversy. The scholarship takes on traditional understandings of Confucianism in two ways: by questioning its origins and by questioning its Chineseness.

The first issue has been powerfully addressed by E. Bruce Brooks, a research professor of Chinese at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and A. Taeko Brooks, his wife and co-researcher. They argue that the "historical" Confucius, far from being a scholar, was a warrior of noble birth but slender means who had the misfortune to live at a time—toward the end of the Zhou dynasty (c. 1123–221 B.C.), which saw the collapse of feudalism and the rise of mass-conscripted armies—when his skills as a charioteer and bowman were becoming obsolete. Although he was not a teacher in any formal sense, his forceful personality attracted followers among younger warriors, the Brookses hypothesize.

The Brookses hold that only sixteen of the sayings attributed to Confucius in the *Analects* actually came from his mouth, and that only a few more came from his direct protégés. Today's image of Confucius as a learned man, they maintain, did not start to emerge until after his death, when groups of his disciples organized themselves into formal schools for the purpose of perpetuating his ethos. In the Brookses' view, Confucius, whose *ipsissima verba* they claim to have isolated in a portion of Chapter 4 of the *Analects*, probably had a bit of education as a member of the nobility, but he did not write any of the other classical texts attributed to him. The Brookses believe that those texts were not even in final form until the fourth century B.C.

Nor did Confucius concern himself with many of the values conventionally attributed to him, according to the Brookses. When he spoke of *ren* (or *rvn*, as they spell it in the idiosyncratic romanization system that Bruce Brooks invented in an attempt to transcribe Mandarin Chinese phonetically), he probably was referring not to the cultivation of moral virtue but to loyalty to one's comrades and other traits desirable in a gentleman soldier. Only in later layers of tradition, the Brookses say, was Confucius "civilianized"—turned into a savant and high minister—and made an expounder of "the systematic structures of Imperial philosophies." As Bruce Brooks told me recently, "His disciples and successors more or less hived off into their own movements. They all had a nominal connection with Confucius, and they were all trying to define the culture in the Warring States period"—a turbulent two centuries during which feudal lords battled one another incessantly in the absence of a strong central government. The Brookses' arguments are laid out in their book *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (1998).

The second big issue—the Chineseness of Confucianism—is the focus of Lionel M. Jensen, an associate professor of history and the director of Chinese studies at the University of Colorado at Denver. Jensen contends that there was no such thing as Confucianism until Jesuit missionaries entered China in the late sixteenth century. Until their arrival there were merely the spiritual and ethical traditions of the *ru*, China's elite scholarly class, who, thanks to the off-and-on patronage of emperors over the years, enjoyed a monopoly on education and on the staffing of bureaucratic posts, by means of the civil-service examinations they administered. The *ru* claimed to be carrying on the tradition of Confucius, and he certainly enjoyed pride of place in their veneration as the leading propagator of *ru* values. However, as Jensen points out in his book *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (1997), the *Analects* was only one of several literary classics esteemed and taught by the *ru* (the others are attributed to Mencius and other early *ru* teachers). Using the model of Christian theology, which centers on the person of Jesus Christ, the Jesuits recast the *ru* tradition as a full-fledged religion centered on the person of its supposed founder, Confucius, who they believed had providentially stumbled across monotheism (in his references to "heaven") and Christian morality (in his version of the Golden Rule).

Jensen says that in exalting Confucius, the Jesuits tended to ignore any Chinese philosophical writings other than the *Analects*, and they did not value China's other, far more widely practiced religious traditions, including Buddhism,

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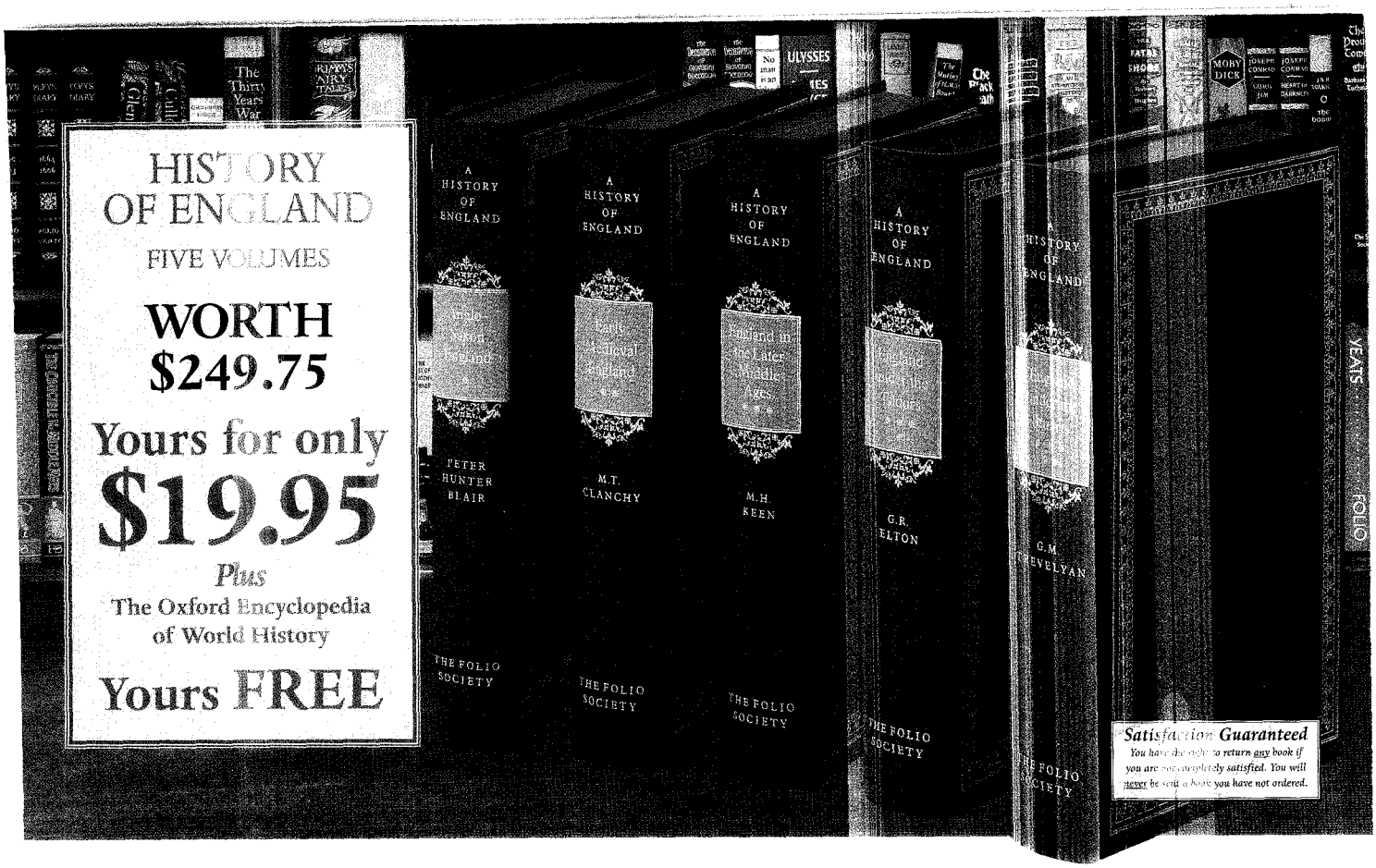

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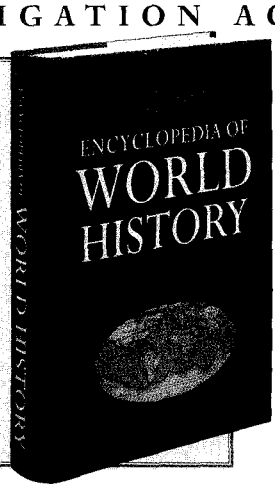

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Taoism, and the omnipresent folk cults of gods and ghosts. The missionaries promoted their Christianized version of *ru* doctrine to the West when they returned home. And then, Jensen theorizes, it was only a matter of time before the Enlightenment philosophes adopted Confucius, savoring his apparent reasonableness and his skepticism about the supernatural. The philosophes in turn created and popularized the image of Confucius that persists among Westerners to this day, and in the process spread the misapprehension that Confucianism is the baseline religion of China in the way that Roman Catholicism is the baseline religion of Spain. In fact, almost no one practices Confucianism in China today, and even in premodern times only scholars, bureaucrats, and occasionally emperors followed the *ru* tradition. If China can be said to have a baseline religion, it is a mixture of popular Taoism and folk beliefs.

According to Jensen, the Jesuits invented the very word "Confucius," a Latinization of Kongfuzi ("Very Reverend Master Kong")—itself an appellation not found in *ru* literature (which called the sage simply Kongzi, or "Master Kong"), although it is occasionally found on the "spirit tablets" honoring him in *ru* temples. Jensen does not believe that Kongzi even existed. "I think he's a literary trope," Jensen says. "He's a figure who came to stand for certain things." Jensen is currently researching the possibility that Kongzi—whose birth, like that of Jesus, is the subject of many miraculous tales—had his origins as a mythological figure of ancient Chinese fertility cults.

On the surface, the theories of the Brookses and Jensen would seem contradictory, because the Brookses believe that Confucius was a real person who was born and died in the years ascribed to him. The two theories are, however, quite complementary, both contending that the Confucian tradition had no single founder but grew incrementally over many centuries, changing as cultural circumstances changed. For the Brookses, the powerful personality of a gentleman soldier lies at the bottom of the tradition, whereas Jensen sees that place occupied by a powerful mental construct.

And both theories, though iconoclastic in many particulars, have some common ground with the work of other specialists. Most Sinologists these days would agree that Confucius, if he existed at all, has left little concrete evidence of what he was like, and that the traditional biographical material associated with him is largely legend. It is also accepted academic wisdom that the *Analects* was put together over several generations—although few argue that it took quite the length of time the Brookses postulate. As early as the seventeenth century, for example, scholars in China began noticing that the second half of the *Analects* seemed stylistically and thematically different from the first half, probably reflecting influences other than Confucius' own. "We've known for a long time that some of the later parts of the book are suspect," John E. Wills Jr., a professor of Chinese history at the University of Southern California, says. "After Chapter Ten or Twelve you get a lot of fishy Taoist stuff in there."

Last year the American Academy of Religion awarded Jensen's *Manufacturing Confucianism* its prize for the best first book in religious history. And the solid scholarship evident in the Brookses' *The Original Analects* (though not necessarily the book's conclusions) has been endorsed by two of America's leading experts on classical China, David S. Nivison, of Stanford, and Frederick W. Mote, of Princeton.

John S. Major, a Sinologist who taught for many years at Dartmouth, explains that some of the evidence that the *Analects* was composed over a long time takes the form of changes over the centuries in Chinese characters used to denote grammatical markers—but he takes issue with some of the Brookses' methodology. "[Bruce Brooks] likes to assign precise dates to the *Analects*' layers, and that's where I think he's stretching it," Major says. "He tends to assume that the evidence we have of a certain period is all the evidence there is. For example, there's a passage that refers to a battle, and we know that in this year there was this battle—so as far as Brooks is concerned, the passage must have been written that year. But it might have referred to a different battle that we don't know about. He also removes passages that don't fit his theories." For instance, in reconstructing Chapter 4 of the *Analects* (the only chapter that the Brookses say contains Confucius' own words) the Brookses have moved more than a third of the text to another section, including sayings that extol filial piety, self-control, moderation, and other virtues they believe Confucius never espoused. They contend that these sayings do not match the other material in Chapter 4 thematically. Major rejects this reasoning, arguing that the Brookses simply lopped off those portions of the chapter that do not jibe with their picture of Confucius. Such issues are likely to spark intense debate in the profession for some time to come.

EVEN during its heyday the *ru* tradition was never much practiced outside educated circles, although the *ru* teachings of respect for elders and education were widely disseminated at the popular level through proverbs, folk tales, and instructions for weddings and other ceremonies. When the Chinese government abolished the old civil-service examinations in 1905 and began to Westernize the education system, the *ru* class became obsolete, and anything resembling institutionalized Confucianism disappeared. The Nationalist revolutionaries who overthrew the imperial government in 1912 went further, equating Confucius with despotism and technological backwardness; and both Mao Zedong's ascendancy, in 1949, and his Cultural Revolution, in 1966–1976, included a methodical attack on all remnants of classical Chinese civilization. However, as early as the 1930s, when Mao was consolidating his Red Army in northern China, some non-Marxist academics and even National-

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ist politicians began to take an interest in Confucius, hoping to find a "third way" that was neither Communist nor derivative of Western thought. They were the first New Confucians, and their aim was to recast Confucius' teachings as being fully compatible with modern technological training and liberal democracy, using the Confucian reverence for learning and the Confucian emphasis on merit rather than birth. After Mao came to power, a second generation of New Confucians fled to university positions in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Some of their students eventually emigrated to the United States and became professors themselves.

The best known of the North American New Confucians is Tu Wei-ming, a professor of Chinese history and philosophy at Harvard and the director of the prestigious Harvard-Yenching Institute. The mainland-born, Taiwan-educated Tu has made it his mission to re-Confucianize East Asia and to promulgate Confucianism as a universal religion perfectly suited to Asian modernity. Tu works in the tradition of Zhu Xi, a twelfth-century *ru* scholar who was heavily influenced by Buddhism. Zhu developed Kongzi's teachings into a full-blown metaphysical system based on the cultivation of harmony between oneself and the cosmos. This system was much more like a religion than the earlier Confucian tradition had been, and it became imperial orthodoxy and later spread to Korea and Japan. "Confucianism so conceived is a way of life which demands an existential commitment on the part of Confucians no less intensive and comprehensive than that demanded of the followers of other spiritual traditions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism," Tu wrote in 1976.

Tu's campaign has made some inroads. During the 1980s Lee Kuan Yew, then Singapore's Prime Minister, invited Tu and others to help set up a high school curriculum that included Confucian principles (the project fizzled amid vigorous protests from Singapore's non-Chinese population). And post-Mao China has begun to reappropriate Confucius, hosting symposia in Beijing every five years to celebrate his birth. In the main, however, the university-based New Confucians—a new *ru* class, so to speak—are theologians without a flock. Even on Taiwan, where religious observance is prevalent and where a man who claims to be Confucius' seventy-eighth lineal descendant lives, few residents identify their spiritual beliefs with the teachings of Master Kong. "Confucian values *are* very pervasive among the Chinese, but they're so diffuse that people don't recognize them as Confucian," Hoyt Tillman, a professor of Chinese cultural history at Arizona State University, explains. "They just say, 'That's the way we Chinese do it.'"

The upstart theories of the Brookses and Jensen only make the New Confucians' re-Confucianizing project more problematic—for reasons that go beyond what they say about Confucius himself. The Brookses argue that the *ru* tradition, and even Chinese literary civilization, are not nearly so ancient and time-honored as is often maintained. And Jensen contends that New Confucianism is itself a largely Western product. At the turn of the century, he says, two Chinese intellectuals who were widely read in Western ideas grafted some of them onto the Chinese image of Kongzi and his legacy. Zhang Binglin used the cultural-evolutionary theories of Weber and Herbert Spencer to recast Kongzi as a secular quasi-modern, China's first rationalizer of a superstitious indigenous tradition; Hu Shi, who had converted briefly to Christianity, interpreted him as a revolutionary like Jesus who had taken a stand against hidebound religious authority. Jensen believes that the New Confucians are following Zhang and Hu's lead in viewing the *ru* tradition through the lenses of Western progressivism.

As might be expected, such views are vastly irritating to the New Confucians and other admirers of Chinese tradition. "I think that Lionel Jensen wants to be a little outrageous," says Tu, who was among Jensen's teachers. Wm. Theodore de Bary, a Sinologist at Columbia University who has written prolifically and sympathetically on Zhu Xi and his followers, says, "Confucianism is based on the study of Confucian texts, and the historical development of Confucianism doesn't depend on the theories of the Jesuits or other Western writers. That mistake was precisely what I wanted to avoid when I started studying the texts, back in the 1940s. So I started reading what the Chinese—not Westerners—said about Confucianism."

If it turns out that Confucius never existed, or that the *Analects* was composed over several centuries, the faith of many New Confucians is likely to be rattled a bit but not destroyed. As they like to remind their listeners, most of them have invested not in a long-dead historical figure but in a tradition that is still alive, and in a haunting body of literature that remains susceptible of holistic reading and continues to reveal, whatever the identities and intentions of its authors, a vivid portrait of an arresting man. "It's like Christianity—Christianity isn't monolithic, and it has changed over the centuries to accommodate changes in society," Robert Neville, the dean of Boston University's school of theology, says. As Neville, a United Methodist minister and a Confucian who meets regularly with Tu and other academics in a group called the Boston Confucians, puts it, "The authority doesn't rest with the person but with the teaching."

Still, among younger Chinese-born scholars who have no ideological stake in Confucianism as a counterweight to Maoism, efforts like those of Jensen and the Brookses to place the reputed sage in the historical context of the culture that produced him come as a relief. "There's a myth about Chinese culture—that it's different from Western culture in its static nature and durability," says Aihe Wang, an assistant professor of ancient Chinese history at Purdue University. "It's a kind of Orientalist myth. Anything that contributes to demythifying this point of view is very healthy."

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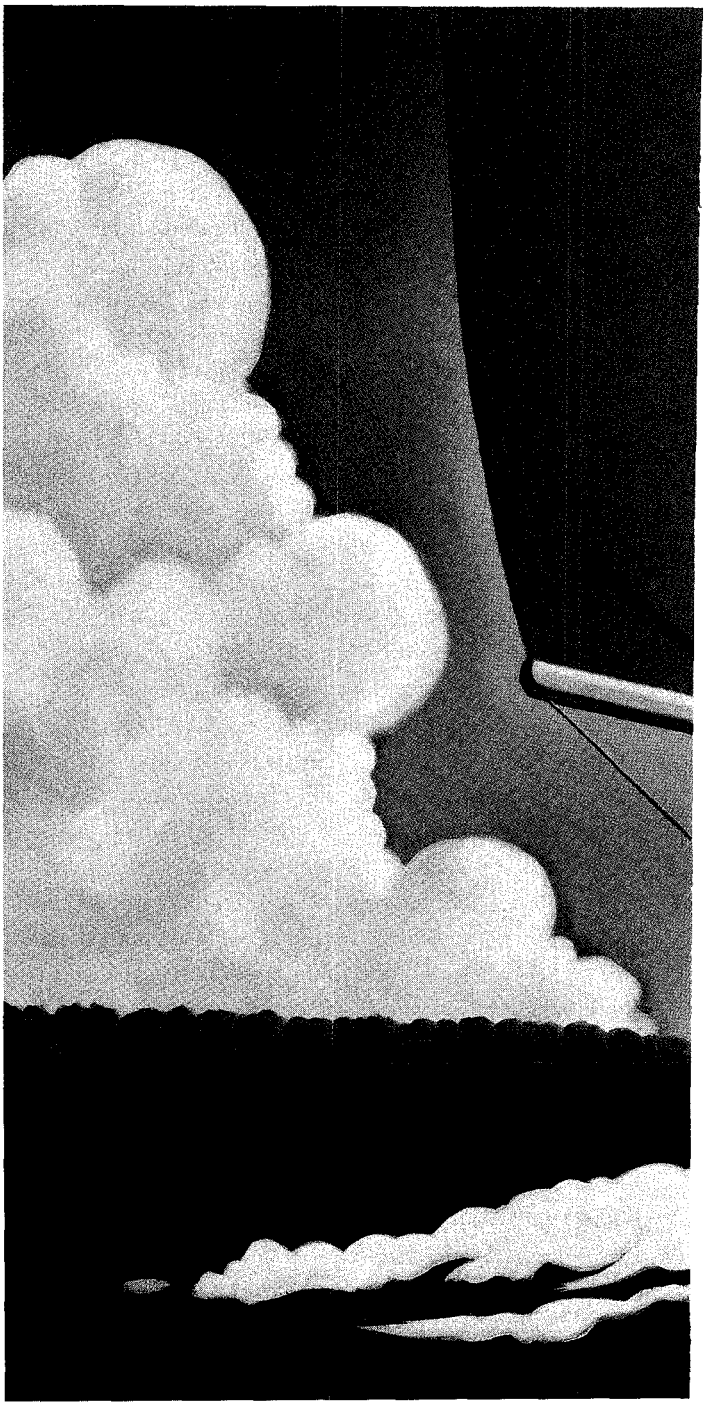
Afternoon of the *Sassanoa*

by JASON BROWN



Jacob had never in his life seen his father or grandfather call for help while on the water. He had been thinking of his mother's shepherd's pie, but now he saw what he should have seen before

JACOB'S father had business in the city that afternoon and the next morning. "Go with him," Jacob's mother said. "You two can spend the night, and you can sign up for pre-season soccer tomorrow morning. It will save me having to give you a ride down."

Jacob agreed to go, even though it would take him away from the island and would involve a trip across to the mainland in the skiff and a seemingly endless hour's drive on the highway. Not bothering to grab a change of clothes, he jumped off the back porch and followed his father down to the island dock.

The fetch between Heron Island and the mainland darkened as Jacob's father, in the stern, thumbed tobacco into his pipe. After a few attempts he gave up trying to light the pipe in the wind, and as if this failure tumbled him toward another, he pushed away from the dock and started to row. Jacob was in the oarsman's seat, and his father, rowing this way, had difficulty keeping the leathers from popping out of the locks. The bags under his father's eyes looked even heavier than usual, and a thin line of blood traced across his freshly shaved neck. His shoulders bunched as he reached forward, his round face growing red and puffy after only a few strokes.

"You take it." His father pushed the oar handles toward Jacob. Even though it was not far to the dock on the main-

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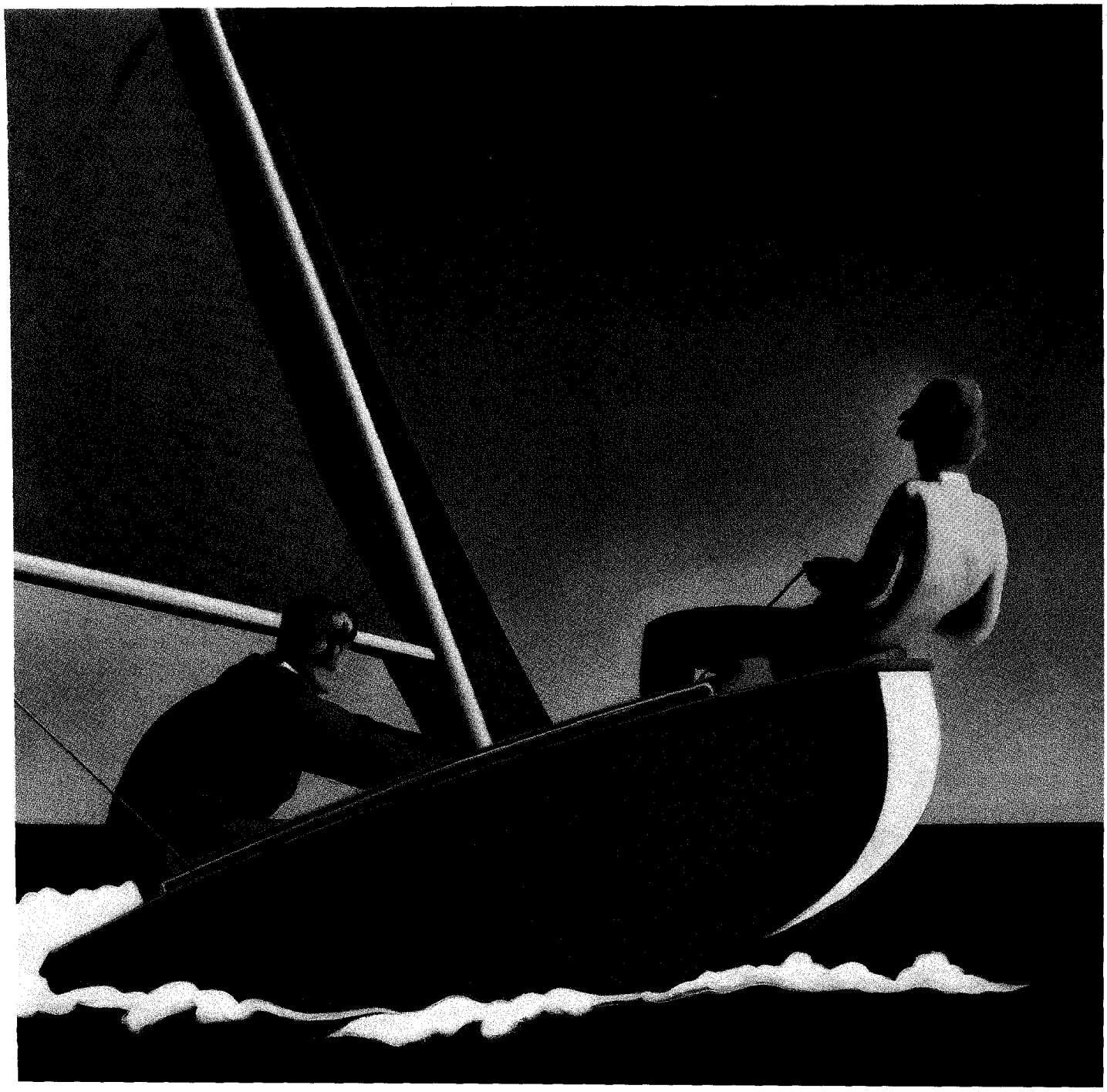

land, they would blow downwind, toward Robinhood Cove, unless Jacob pulled as hard as he could. As a way of not looking at his father's face, he gazed through the Townsend Gut, the narrowest point between the island and the main, where the water funneled in and the wind whipped between the columns of tall pines, kicking up rows of chop.

"It's the best day for sailing we've had yet," his father said. Jacob shot a glance at the *Sassanoa*, riding high on her white hull above the water. Her nose pointed into the wind, and she jumped up like a thoroughbred against her mooring tether.

"Let's go for a short sail, just once across the bay, and then I'll still have time to get to town."

"I thought you had to be there by four. We might not even make it if we start now."

"By five, five-thirty. I just have to meet a guy so he can sign some papers and then have someone take them over to the courthouse before it closes."

Jacob didn't say anything. He had already said enough to his mother about not wanting to go to town. He wanted to play soccer, but he hated anything that took him away from the island. Also, he and his father would be alone for the night, and then Jacob would have to hang around the house on Woodmont Street the next day, waiting for his father to finish work so they could drive back to the island.

Illustrations by R. Kenton Nelson

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He wondered if it was a good idea for his father to leave so little time to get his client to sign the papers, and he knew that when his father rushed, he always drove too fast, and sometimes got a ticket in the speed trap where Route One met the main highway. That would put him in a foul mood for the whole week. Jacob didn't want to say anything about not sailing, didn't want to screw up his chances of taking the boat out alone the next year, while his father was at work, when he could sail by himself down the Maine coast to Five Islands. The tourists there, eating lobsters and clams, would look at him as though he had stepped into their lives from a past century. The year before, his father had said he could take the boat out when he was twelve, the same age at which Jacob's grandfather had let his father go out alone, but this year his father had changed the age to thirteen. Jacob wasn't sure he would ever be old enough at this rate.

"We'll just go across the bay and back," his father said, and nodded in the direction of the *Sassanoa*. Jacob pushed harder on the port oar and swung them around. The day was indeed good for sailing. The pines swayed; the breeze was southerly but cool. Jacob started to row for the island dock. His father's hand shot forward and wrapped around the starboard oar, shoving it into Jacob's chest so hard that it knocked the breath out of him.

"What about the boat bag?" Jacob asked.

"We're just going across the bay once."

His father looked away, apparently realizing that he had accidentally been too rough. Jacob wasn't going to argue about the boat bag. Even his grandfather had gone without it on short sails—just to spite the yacht-club guys and their overprecautions, he would say. Jacob's father opened his briefcase for the cell phone, unfolded the mouthpiece, and pushed POWER, bringing the clear buttons to life with yellow light. He dialed and held the phone to his head, reaching out with the other hand to grab the *Sassanoa*. Frustrated, he handed the phone to Jacob.

"When your mother picks up, tell her we're just going across the bay and back before we head into town."

Jacob took the phone. His father rested his briefcase on the deck of the *Sassanoa*, balanced himself precariously on the seat of the skiff, and pulled himself up. Both Jacob and his mother hated having cell phones on the island, where they came to escape such things, and his mother was already upset about his father's rushing to the city three days into his late-August vacation for an emergency meeting.

"You don't have your windbreaker," his mother said, after Jacob told her what they were doing.

"It's warm out."

"Tell her we're not going to be out long."

Jacob's mother heard her husband. "So call me from town tonight," she said. Jacob didn't know what to say. He said good-bye, his mother said good-bye, and he put the phone in the briefcase.

JACOB couldn't remember a time when they had not come to the island in the summer. Now that his grandmother was too old to stay on the island, Jacob came with just his mother and father. Jacob often helped his mother to scrub clothes against the washboard behind the cottage, using water they caught from the sky and stored in a large tank. Jacob's grandfather had been the pilot of Portland Harbor and his grandparents had lived on the island year-round, without insulation and many other things the cabin still didn't have—things that Jacob wished their house in Portland didn't have either. Sometimes in the fall, after returning to Portland, Jacob refused to use the phone, lights, or running water, as a way of pretending he was still on the island.

As if they were trying to escape, or as if the rush that Jacob expected on the highway had already begun, his father tugged frantically at the sail ties, pulling out the boom crutch and tossing it carelessly under the foredeck, whereas Jacob had been taught to lash it forward to keep it from banging around once they were under way.

Things were done in a certain way on the island, not only because they had been done that way for sixty years but also because it was the right way. Jacob had learned everything about the island from his grandfather. Now that his grandfather was gone, Jacob sometimes wondered if his father was forgetting things. The previous fall Jacob had had to remind him to spread wood chips beneath the *Sassanoa* in the boathouse, to absorb moisture through the winter. The fifty-year-old oak planks, cut from trees on the island, would get dry rot in one season without the wood chips, and he worried that his father did not think of it.

"Just tie the skiff up now," his father yelled. They had always tied the skiff to the stern until the *Sassanoa* was ready to sail. Otherwise the two boats would rub. Jacob moored the skiff to the buoy, as he had been told, and of course his father had not raised the main by then, so he had to sit on the deck and separate the two boats with his legs. His father tugged on the halyard, but it was stuck.

"Damn," his father grumbled. "Jacob, help me for a second." Jacob was reluctant to let the two boats rub, but his father was frustrated, so Jacob pushed the skiff off as far from the sailboat's hull as he could and rushed back to hold the halyard while his father jiggled the runner free. The sail rose easily then, snapping at the air, and Jacob hurried to the bow to find the rail of the skiff rubbing against the *Sassanoa*'s white hull. He swore to himself, pushed the skiff away, and leaned over to see what damage had been done. He saw a scratch three inches long. It hadn't penetrated to the wood, but the skiff had gouged out several layers of white paint and left a green smudge. It would allow moisture closer to the wood. He should fix the scratch right away, as his grandfather had taught him to do, though the only way to really take a scratch out was to haul the *Sassanoa* and repaint the entire hull. Jacob was trying not to think

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about it, but he knew they shouldn't sail now. Not with a scratch in the hull.

"Cast off," his father yelled. The sail was up, but the tiller was still lashed. Jacob untied the bow line but did not let go of the mooring buoy until his father had freed the tiller. Then they drifted back with the wind until the sail scooped the air and leaned them to port. It was a perfect breeze. With the jib up they would move along nicely. The *Sassanoa* never moved very fast. She was nineteen feet on the waterline, but otherwise very much like a Herreshof Bullseye, with a full keel and a wide beam; Jacob's grandfather had designed her to transport his family and their supplies to and from shore.

Jacob raised the jib and tied down the sheet. His father held the tiller and the mainsheet, so Jacob had nothing to do except watch the skiff at the mooring become smaller as they tacked back and forth in the narrow space between the island and the mainland. As they came through the gut and faced the bay, the sails braced against the wind coming in off the ocean. His father loosened the main, leaned back, and eyed the telltales. The telltales had been his father's addition, after his grandfather's death, and Jacob knew they weren't right. He never looked at them when he sailed, but felt the boat's movement under him to find the wind. If the breeze was stiff but he felt no tension on the tiller and little heel, he was off the wind. His grandfather had taught him to rely as little as possible on sight. Eyes were no good in fog or darkness.

"I bet we can make Knubble Head in one tack," his father said. Jacob tried to gauge how the wind and tide would take them over the three quarters of a nautical mile. The wind was shifting around to the southwest, so they could head farther out, but Jacob wondered how long they'd need to get back. If the wind stayed southerly, or even if it moved completely westerly, they would have no problem ploughing straight across the bay. Jacob looked around for the Coast Guard, but the bay was empty except for a few lobster boats and a trawler. They had often sailed across the bay without the boat bag—the *Sassanoa* could handle any kind of rough weather that might come up unexpectedly. But the Coast Guard had fined them twice for not having life jackets; his father had tried to argue himself out of the ticket each time.

Jacob looked back at the granite face of Heron Island, jutting south like the prow of a ship. His mother was working beside the house on the island, taking laundry in off the line. Inside the cabin Jacob's dead grandfather stared down with cold eyes at the dining-room table from a framed photo on the wall. Jacob assumed that the circumstances of his time had made him hard. Jacob remembered when he had rowed over to the island with his grandfather in the winter to cut down a Christmas tree; steam had risen from the water in white patches like ghosts and blown with the wind across the bay. The scene had seemed medieval; the cracked brown knuckles of his grandfather's hands moved toward him and away, rowing. Jacob had removed his glove and dipped his hand in the water, which felt warm, like a bath, compared with the air.

Even now, Jacob thought, the year could have been 1878 on the island—nothing about the kerosene lamps or cast-iron pots suggested that people elsewhere had ever seen electricity, and in the weeks they spent on the island each summer, Jacob forgot the appliances of their house in Portland, where his father rose and dressed in a suit each morning before driving off to a twelve-story glass building. From his office Jacob's father could see the bridge and the bay where his own father had guided ships, and the ocean beyond, where his grandfather had fished the Grand Banks.

"Haul in the jib," his father snapped, and Jacob obeyed, even though he knew the jib would not come in any farther without spilling air and losing some of what his father wanted, which was to point higher so that they could reach Knubble in one tack. His father pulled in the mainsheet, running the line down around the cleat. The *Sassanoa* heeled over in response. Rollers from a storm that had never reached shore pitched them up. Jacob did not worry. He and his grandfather had been out in fifty-knot winds. The ribs and planks creaked, but nothing gave, not even the old hand-sewn sails. But the boat was weaker now, since his grandfather's death.

As they approached the Knubble lighthouse, Jacob saw tourists standing on the rocks raise binoculars to examine them. The *Sassanoa* was an unusual sight, with its mahogany brightwork on deck, its white hull and blood-red sails, the spars themselves varnished spruce, cut from a forest on the mainland less than a mile from the island. Jacob saw a boy about his age borrow binoculars from his father and look out, and Jacob envied the boy for seeing the boat, though he would rather be where he was, sailing her. She sailed very nicely, not fast like the new fiberglass boats built with long fin keels and flat bottoms. Those were good for speed, but not for rollers and sudden winds. Jacob would take the *Sassanoa* in any bad weather over one of those ugly boats. The *Sassanoa* rolled over the swells and did not slap spray back into the cockpit. A powerful, curling swell could punch a hole in the side of a fiberglass hull, but the *Sassanoa*, with its thick oak planks, absorbed each blow like a prizefighter sizing up his opponent's strength.

"Let's sail over to Mauldin," his father said. "From there it'll be a straight shot back in."

Jacob looked down at his watch. "I don't know if you'll have time to make it into town if we don't head back now."

"It won't make much difference," his father said, looking up at the sail. "We can't miss a wind like this."

"I don't think we'll have enough time," Jacob said again, staring at the floorboards.

Instead of getting angry, as Jacob expected, his father smiled, looking up at the sail. "A wind like this will take us

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anywhere." Jacob looked at his father and saw his crooked yellow teeth and bumpy nose, the swell of fat girdling his jaw. For the first time, he saw his father as he imagined a woman might see him, in the clear, unforgiving sunlight.

Jacob glanced up toward the southwestern sky, at a line of thick dark clouds moving toward them with the freshening wind. Already his father had to ease off on the mainsheet to accommodate the extra force. Thunderheads. "Head for shore when you see those," his grandfather had said.

After a long tack they came up on the high granite side of Mauldin Island. Some people in a house above sat on their porch looking in the direction of the thunderheads, probably discussing whether they should secure the shutters. The weather was unpredictable, even when one could see it coming, but finally Jacob mentioned it.

"What about those thunderheads?"

"Those are thunderheads," his father said matter-of-factly. No smile this time. Suddenly, as a small cloud shaded the sun, his father looked down into the green water at the small ripples curling into the windward side of the hull. He seemed to be concentrating on a difficult decision.

The bow of the *Sassanoa* ploughed through the water toward the rocks. The shallows dropped off immediately, but they were closing fast, fifteen yards, twelve, and still his father looked over the windward side. Jacob determined not to say anything and found himself almost hoping the boat would crash into the granite. He shook his head at the thought. Five yards away his father casually swung the tiller across and brought them about. Jacob unhitched the jib and cleated it on the port side. He readied himself to let the sail out for heading downwind, but his father kept them headed out of the bay, straight for New Wagon Harbor.

"I thought we were going to head in," Jacob said, trying not to sound anxious.

"I thought we would head out and sail through the 'trickiest bit of sailing in the East,'" his father said, quoting Jacob's grandfather. His father gave a quick nod in the direction they were heading, and Jacob saw the corner of his

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LOST PARROT

She can cry his name from today to tomorrow.
She can Charlie him this, cracker him that, there
in the topmost he hangs like
a Christmas ornament,
his tail
a cascade of emeralds and limes.

The child is heartsick. She has taped messages
to the mailboxes, the names
he responds to, his favorite seeds.
At twilight she calls and calls.

Oh, Charlie, you went everywhere with her,
to the post office and the mall, to the women's
room at the Marriott where you perched
on the stall, good-natured, patient.

And didn't you love to take her thumb
in your golden beak
and, squeezing tenderly, shriek and shriek
as if your own gentleness
were killing you?

You were her darling, her cinnamon stick, her pedagogue.
You knew her secret names
in Persian and ancient Greek. At the beach
you had your own chair and umbrella.
Oh, pampered bird. The neighbors sympathize. But what's
love compared with wild red fruit, a big
gold moon, and an evening that smells of paradise?

If she were older, she'd join the other
sad girls for drinks, she'd lick
the salt from her tequila glass and say something wise
she'd heard said a hundred times before.
Love is a cage she's glad to be free of.

Oh, Charlie, you were her pope and popinjay, her
gaudy, her flambeau, her magnificat.
You were the postcard
each morning delivered to her room, her all-day sunset.

In the topmost fronds you squall and squawk
to the other flashy runaways,
Say paradise! No dice, no dice.

—SUSAN MITCHELL

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mouth rise as he leaned down to pull in the mainsheet.

"What about your client and signing those papers?"

"Fuck it. Just fuck it."

Jacob waited for him to say more, but his father studied the luff in the canvas where the main joined the mast. "Winds like this don't come around every day." He narrowed his eyes, pulling in on the sheet and carefully adjusting the tiller. Jacob had never seen him look so determined. "We can make New Wagon Harbor in one tack."

Jacob wondered about his father's work—if people would be left waiting in town and if they would be angry. Over the past months Jacob had heard conversations between his parents about his father's practice, and Jacob was not sure that everything was going well.

NEW Wagon Harbor, on the southern tip of a peninsula, was formed by three small, burly islands nestled close to shore. They sailed within ten yards of the mainland on the port side, trying to edge into the harbor without tacking again. Jacob could see the pale, sharp rocks below the tidal line, and the red keel that edged up toward the surface as they heeled over.

"How much room we got?" his father asked.

"You got it," Jacob answered.

"One tack."

They were inside the harbor, the mainland and dock to their left, the three islands to their right, and Jacob felt relieved. As if a hand had released its pressure on the mast, they tilted upright as the wind diminished behind the islands.

That wasn't the trickiest bit of sailing either. Now they were going to sail between the northern and eastern islands, where unmarked rocks spiked up from the bottom. Jacob thought the tide was too low, which was the only thing that had made his grandfather describe this reef as tricky. They simply needed to know where the rocks were and to go at the right tide.

"Our momentum will carry us until we can catch the wind again," his father said. "And I'll steer us around the rocks."

Jacob nodded, though he was doubtful. They couldn't see the rocks beneath the surface, but his father had sailed this many times before, with his own father and alone. Jacob didn't know how shallow it would be. The rollers crashed into the windward side of the islands, but the water in the harbor was calm.

"Pull the jib in," his father said. Some wind would come around and they would heel, so they would draw less. That would help.

Jacob uncleated the jib and recleated it, but the maneuver was pointless—the jib had been lashed too tight to begin with.

"Good." His father pulled in on the mainsheet, preparing for the wind. The tide was moving out, lowering every minute now. Several families were eating lunch on the pier outside the Lobster Shack. They stopped cracking their lobsters for a moment to stare at the red sails of the *Sassanoa*, gliding by from sheer momentum on the flat water. One of the youngest children leaped up when she saw the sails and raced toward the end of the pier. Her mother ran after, yelling the girl's name. The girl could have run off the end of the pier. She stopped at the last minute, though, and pointed at the red sails.

Jacob could see, twelve, ten yards ahead, a line of blue water marking the wind. As they drew closer, the wind receded and the shallow rocks appeared, yellow and white beneath the surface. Jacob watched the blue patch of wind on the water draw back like a snake into its hole and vanish. Now they were drifting straight onto the rocks, with no wind coming between the islands to make them heel. His father knew and had only a few seconds to decide what they would do. He could gradually steer them to port, but without any wind there was no point in throwing the tiller over. They would still drift forward. Before either could act or speak, Jacob saw just behind his father's head a patch of dark-blue water, a stiff gust, advancing from the north. Jacob barely had time to release the jib, though he realized later that it was the wrong thing to do. The wind caught inside the loose jib and lurched them straight forward at no heel. His father dropped his jaw and put his hands out to the side, as if some enormous creature had lifted him off the ground and were preparing to swallow him whole. Jacob waited for the sound of the rocks, but halfway through the passage none had come, and he thought maybe they would make it all the way through. Then came a thud that seemed distant, lurching the *Sassanoa*'s bow down and her stern into the air. The wind caught the trimmed mainsail and pulled them sideways off the rock. When they were broadside to the wind and going over, Jacob finally unleashed the mainsail and let the boom fly. The wind spilled out; they were off the rock. His father leaned over the side of the boat to check for damage.

"No harm done," he said, and grabbed the tiller. There had been only a thud, Jacob thought. His father steered them toward the channel. Jacob trimmed the jib, and they sped along with the wind and rocks behind them. The collision seemed never to have happened, and Jacob knew they would not talk about it—as if it were a secret they would have to keep from his dead grandfather.

OUTSIDE the harbor the wind blew twice as strong, and the swells rose high into the air. The hull planed. Jacob sat on the rail and adjusted the jib sheet, while his father sat on the transom so that he could see over the bow. When they rose to the top of a swell, they could see out to sea as if from the top of a mountain. The bow sliced up one side of a wave and the stern coasted down the other side, just as his grandfather had designed them to do, and Jacob was immensely proud in that moment, thinking of his grandfather's mind and hands creating such an efficient and wor-

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thy craft. More than that: the *Sassanoa* was a work of art, perfectly balanced between the wind and the ocean, that at her mooring in the morning sat as calm as a sleeping dove.

Jacob looked back at his father, who grinned like a child, his open mouth and bright wide eyes pointed up at the blood-red sail as if the very idea of the wind's moving a boat over water at such a speed were a discovery he had just made for the world.

As they coasted down a swell, Jacob leaned over and placed his hand on the side of the hull. He did not think of turning around even as they passed Damirscove Island. He could see in through the windows of the old Coast Guard station there; at a certain height he could see in one window and out another. Europeans had settled on the treeless island, he knew, before Plymouth or Jamestown. They had fished there, and lived in cold shacks. Several hundred years later the Coast Guard had come, and now it was gone too, and the island was empty except for the terns, gulls, herons, and snowy egrets that swarmed over the grass.

After Damirscove there were no other landmarks for gauging distance over water, and Jacob did not look back except to check his father's eyes darting from the sails to the ocean in perfect concentration. Jacob didn't care how far they sailed, as long as his father continued to smile.

Jacob looked up at the sail and noticed how the pressure of the wind moved from one side to the other as his father shifted the lines and the tiller. Some of the wind spilled out the side of the sail, swirled around to the other side, and caused a luff. With a slight adjustment they were back on track. Then Jacob noticed that the rear stay was frayed. Three or four of the metal threads that twisted around each other had snapped, which left two or three at the most to hold all the weight of the sail and the wind. Any number of bad things would happen, Jacob thought, if the rear stay broke. The mast would snap immediately, and might drag the boat over in this strong a wind. The weight of the keel would probably keep them upright. Even so, without the sail they had only a paddle. No motor. Jacob promised himself he would check all the rigging the next day.

"Dad, look." Jacob pointed up at the stay, and as he pointed, he knew he was also pointing a finger at his father for not keeping the boat up to his grandfather's standards. His father glanced up and saw the fray but did not seem concerned.

"It'll hold."

The wind vanished, not immediately, as often happened, but gradually, to Jacob's relief, until his father didn't need to concentrate so hard on their heading. Jacob could tell that his father's mind was on some other worry, probably something to do with work.

"We should head in," Jacob said. He hadn't even looked back for some time. He wanted his father to be the first one.

His father did look, and raised his eyebrows, not in shock but in surprise, so Jacob looked back too. They were a good

distance from shore. The wind usually switched in the evening, after a lull. This was that lull. They would just have to wait for the switch. With any luck it would be a south or a west wind. In any case, the water around the *Sassanoa*, for as far as they could see in all directions, was smooth and dull gray-green.

JACOB never noticed the cold when the sails were full, when they were moving, but now, in the stillness, he rubbed the goosebumps on his arms.

His father pulled the collar of his sports coat up around his neck and looked down. "Damn!" he yelled, and yanked his

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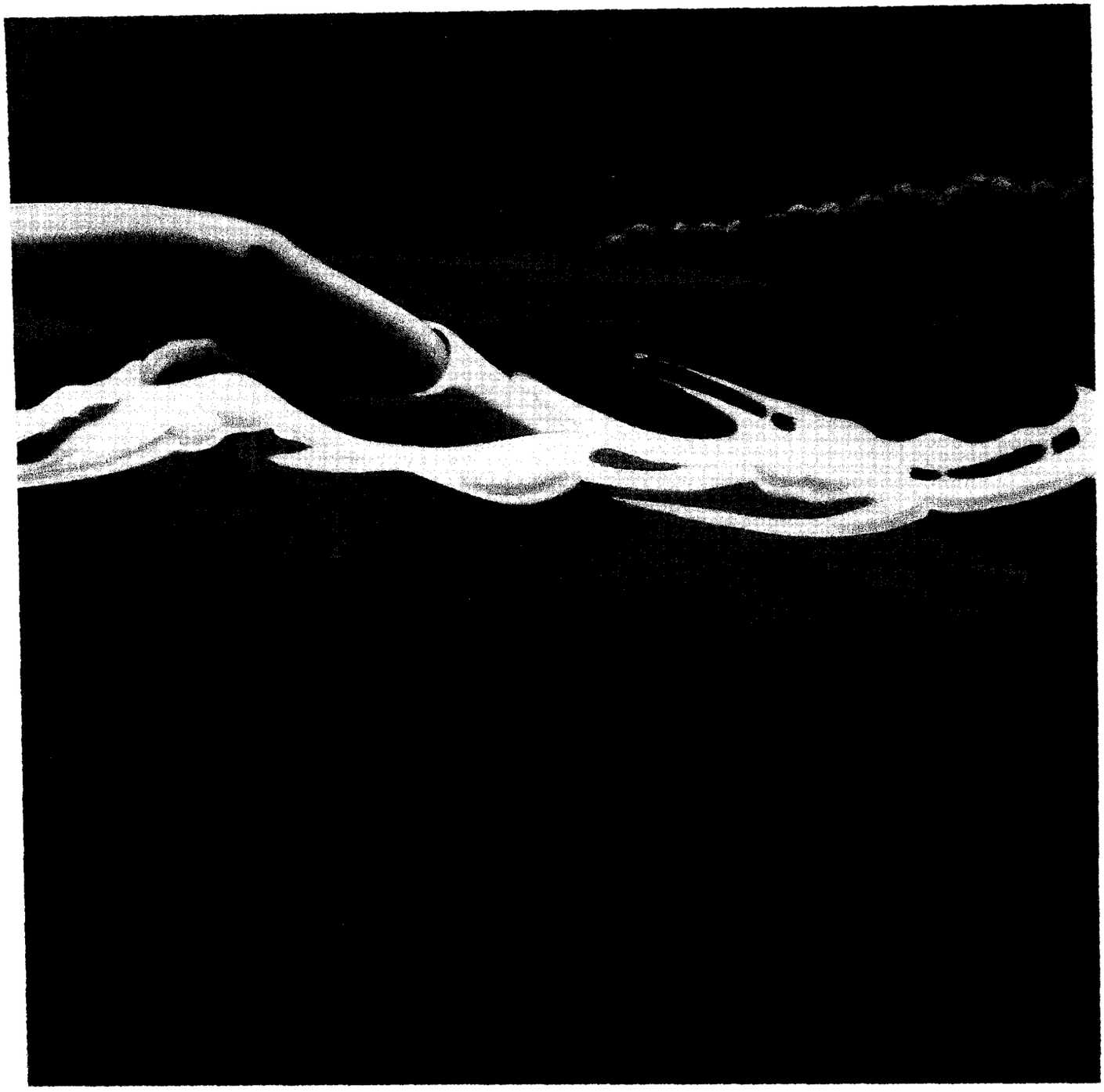

briefcase off the floor. He brushed the water off the leather surface. "I don't think any water got inside." At first Jacob thought he was talking about the *Sassanoa*.

The sails were swaying now, like curtains, in the dim light. The horizon had just turned orange. The night was going to be clear, though fog might roll in from offshore. For the first time, Jacob noticed that his sneakers were soaked. That's why he was so cold. Under way, he seemed to lose all sensation, but now he could see that his feet rested in water that hadn't been there while the boat was heeling. Their bow had dipped, riding the swells, but Jacob hadn't seen any water coming over.

His father let go of the tiller and the mainsheet. With no wind they couldn't control the *Sassanoa*'s direction. Jacob looked at the back of his father's hands, resting on top of the briefcase. With the dried sea salt on the tanned skin, Jacob thought his father looked like a man who had been out to sea a very long time, though the briefcase and sports jacket suggested that he was on the way to his office. Jacob understood that the *Sassanoa* was leaking through the bilge, probably where the keel was bolted to the hull. When they had thudded against the rock in New Wagon Harbor, they must have loosened the joint.

"I think we're taking on," Jacob said.

"I know," his father said, not looking up. "I'm thinking."

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Jacob was silent. He decided he had better think too. As a matter of pride, his grandfather had never kept a motor on board. The hand-pump bailer was on the island, with the life jackets and flares, in the boat bag. His father went under the foredeck and rummaged around. He came out a moment later holding the anchor, a twenty-pound aluminum hook attached to a length of chain and rope. The water had risen two inches above the floorboards and was still rising. Jacob wondered how far they were from shore—maybe a mile, maybe more. More. A lobster boat motored by on its way home a little to the west, but neither Jacob nor his father thought to wave. The boatman would not have seen them anyway.

His father held a paddle in one hand and the anchor in the other. Suddenly he stood up on the deck and waved the paddle in the direction of the lobster boat. "Hey! Hey!" They could see the man in yellow waders behind the wheel, looking forward, not back.

Jacob had never in his life seen his father or grandfather call for help while on the water. His heart pounded, and he was no longer cold or tired. He had been thinking about his mother's shepherd's pie, but now he saw what he should have seen before.

"What are we going to do?"

His father sat down. "We'll be fine. Let's see what the problem is down there." He lifted the floor hatch and stared down through the water to the bottom of the bilge. The compartment narrowed to a V, where Jacob could see the keel bolts protruding. His father removed his jacket, folded it carefully on top of his briefcase, and reached his hand down into the bilge.

"I can feel the water flowing in around one of the bolts. I think." He lifted his arm out. All the rollers had vanished now, and the water was flat for as far as they could see. His father removed his shirt. Jacob was startled by the white skin and curly black hairs. He recognized the future shape of his own body, but had trouble imagining himself covered with so much hair. His father ripped the shirt on a cleat, tore it into strips, and leaned back into the bilge. The water was so deep now that he had to crane his neck to keep his face from going underwater. He gave up trying and plunged both his arms and his head under the water. Jacob watched numbly as his father's back muscles bulged and strained against the skin. He popped out a moment later, dripping and gulping for air.

"I wrapped the cloth around the bolt. Hand me the anchor and I'll pound it down. That should wedge the cloth in and stop the leak."

Jacob handed the anchor to his father, who went back underwater. Jacob heard the thud of the metal anchor against the top of the bolt, and occasionally the sound of his father missing and hitting the wooden spine. His father came up for air and went back down. Finally he rested, and set the anchor down. "That should do it."

Jacob nodded. His father was shivering violently. "Put on your jacket, Dad."

"Yeah." After wrapping himself in the jacket for a moment and rubbing his arms, his father looked intently at Jacob. "We shouldn't have tried the trickiest bit."

"We'll fix it when we get back. We should probably replace those bolts anyway."

"You're right about that. Those bolts must be twenty-five years old. This is an old boat, you know. Let's get this water out of here. You start, will you? You'll have to use what's left of my shirt to sop it up, and I'll start paddling."

Jacob picked up the shirt and soaked it in the water, but quickly realized that his father was not thinking right. Instead of using the shirt, he took off his sneakers and started to scoop out the water. "The tide's going out," he said.

"I know."

THEY were moving farther away from shore.

His father paddled as Jacob scooped up water and dumped it over the side. His father kept looking down at him, and Jacob guessed what he was thinking. He wanted to somehow hide it from his father, he didn't want his father to get angry at himself, but Jacob couldn't help it—the water was still rising.

His father sat down and stared back into the bilge. His feet were wet and he was shivering again. Jacob looked down too, but in the darkness he couldn't see the bottom. His father removed his jacket again and thrust himself beneath the water. He stayed down so long that Jacob almost touched the white skin of his father's back to make sure he was all right. Then his father burst out and stumbled back across the boat, landing against the tiller.

"Damn. It's not the bolt. There's a crack in one of the lower planks. One of the ribs must have pushed out when we hit and split the plank or something. I don't know. I can't patch it from inside."

His father's eyes widened when he saw his briefcase sitting on one of the seats. He lunged across the boat and fumbled with the latches.

"Let me," Jacob said, rising and standing next to his father, but his father pushed him away.

"I got it." The two latches clicked up and the briefcase popped open. His father grabbed the phone with his numb hands. He had to cradle it in one palm and aim with the index finger of the other hand at the POWER button. Jacob could see his father's teeth gleaming in the moonlight, but he turned his attention to the phone and waited for the yellow lights to appear on the panel. Nothing happened. His father pushed again, and again.

"The battery's dead. Didn't you turn the power off?" His father looked at the phone in total disbelief, and then at Jacob, who, to avoid his father's eyes, also looked at the phone.

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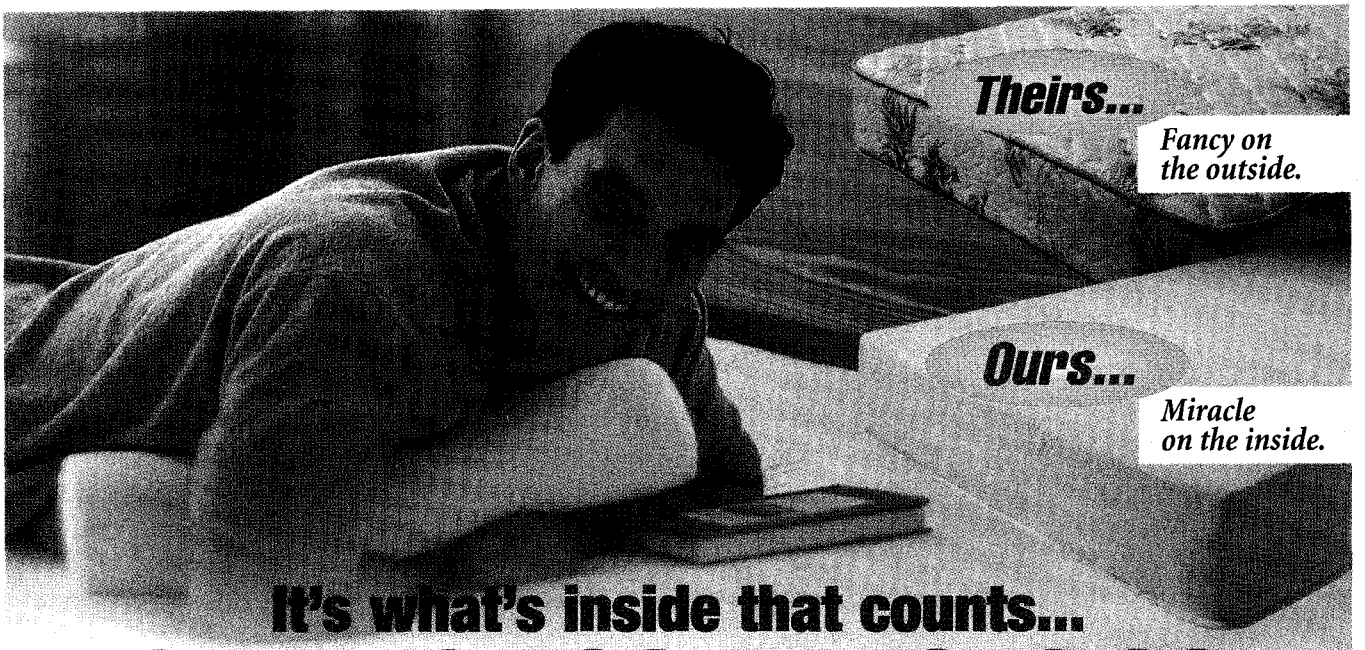

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He tried to remember if he had pushed the POWER button after talking to his mother. His father let out an awful noise, half growl, half scream, and threw the phone toward shore. Jacob heard it plop like a small stone. His father picked up his briefcase, too, swung it against the deck of the boat with a crack, and then hurled it out as well. White papers fluttered through the air like a flock of panicked terns before drifting slowly to the water and vanishing. The open briefcase tipped sideways and sank from view.

His father watched the place where it had been. Jacob watched his father and thought that they could have used the briefcase to bail. Maybe they could have stayed ahead of the leak until morning, when someone would see them for sure. "Maybe someone will see us out here tonight," he said.

His father looked up at the rigging, his shoulder blades pinching together. "Not with red canvas. We'll have to patch the crack from the outside. Hand me my shirt there, and the anchor."

Jacob rested them on the deck as his father removed his shoes and slacks, groaning when his body slid into the cold water. The white arm came up and grasped the shirt and anchor. Then he put the anchor back on the deck.

"You'll have to dangle the anchor over the side for me while I use the edge of it to stuff the rag into the crack." His father's voice was shaky, and his teeth chattered.

Jacob leaned over the side and watched his father descend into the dark water.

"Give me a little more slack," his father said after coming up for air. Then he went back down again, and Jacob heard faint taps on the hull. His father came back up. "It's a long, narrow crack," he said. "It must bend inward, but we can't get to it from the inside without ripping up the floor. Even then I think it's out of reach from the inside."

Jacob didn't want to say anything. His father went down again, tapped, and came up. This time he let out a long moan before sucking in air and going back down. Tapping turned to banging. Jacob could see the outline of the silver anchor swinging through the water below. His father was swinging as hard as he could through the water at the crack. Jacob had an idea which plank it was. The last thud was muffled. He looked down to see his father pulling back on the anchor.

"No!" Jacob said, but it was too late. His father jimmied the anchor out and then came up for air. Jacob hauled the anchor aboard and stuck his arm down into the bilge. He could not reach the plank his father had been hitting, but he could feel the flow of water rushing in where the anchor had made a gash.

"I'm too cold," his father said.

Jacob turned and wrapped his hands around one of his father's arms and pulled. His father kicked and lunged up, eventually getting his stomach over the gunwale and grabbing the edge of the seat. Jacob put his arms around his father's waist, feeling the hair on his father's back press against his face, and tugged. The flesh was cold to his lips and hands, and Jacob was afraid to let go, even when his father was safely on the seat.

His father drew away, rose to his feet, and found the anchor. He dropped it, and then clamped it between his hands and swung it over his head like an ax. The anchor bounced off the deck and fell to the floor. His father grabbed it out of the water and lifted it over his head again.

"No, no!" Jacob reached for his father, who was using the last of his full strength to swing the anchor against the deck. This time the anchor bounced into the ocean. They both watched as the chain and fifty feet of rope snaked out of the boat, snapped in the air, and disappeared. Jacob felt embarrassed for having cried out.

His father sat down on the seat. The water rose almost to his knees. Jacob shook, but his father was beyond that stage. His eyes drooped.

"We'll have to swim." His father barely mumbled, he was so groggy with cold.

Jacob nodded, but he knew that was impossible. The tide had taken them farther out. Even in late August the water was cold, and they wouldn't have much time before hypothermia set in. Jacob was an excellent swimmer. He swam for a team at school, but that was in eighty-degree water at an indoor pool. The distance to shore would take him an hour and a half. A long string of lights followed the shoreline of New Wagon Harbor and seemed close enough to touch.

"You swim for shore and get help."

Jacob couldn't see his father's lips moving. "No."

"Don't argue. Take the paddle and swim as well as you can. Don't let go of it. Go now."

Jacob stood on the gunwale with the paddle in his hand, looking down into the water. The deck was less than a foot off the surface now. He eased himself in, gripping the paddle in his hand.

"I'll be right back," Jacob yelled, but he heard no response. He could see the silhouette of his father's head and thought about checking on him, but decided he had better keep going, focusing on the brightest light on shore, probably someone's dock, and kicking with all his force. He felt strong at first, but then he grew stiff, his legs moving in slow motion. He looked behind him. The outline of the sails seemed lower in the water. He turned and kicked harder, afraid to lose sight of the dock but also thinking that maybe the wind would still come up. Soon he could barely move his legs, and the water felt warmer as he turned onto his back to rest. His thoughts slowed. Tomorrow, he thought, they would tow the *Sassanoa* to Heron Island and patch the hole. But the dark triangle set against the stars sank into the blue-black horizon, and there was no sign of the pale shoulders and arms of the man who had promised him summer afternoons when he would finally sail alone.

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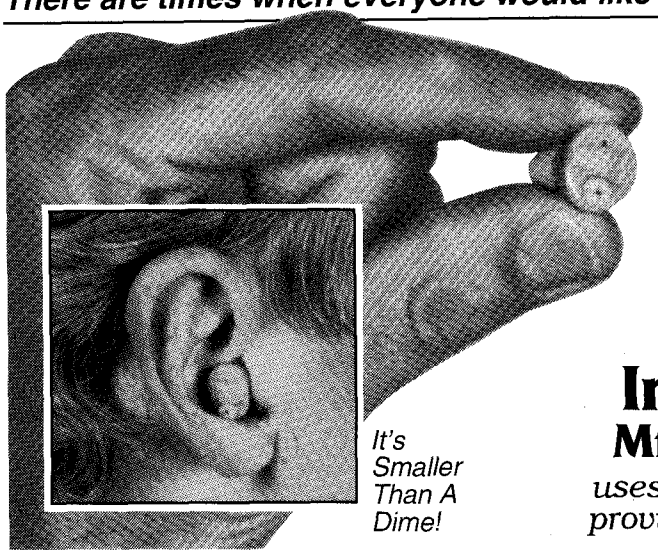

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by Martin Howard

For the last couple of years, I've constantly had to ask people to repeat what they just said to me... I've turned up the volume on the TV so loud that everyone in the house complains... and my wife and children tell me that I'm speaking too loud.

Naturally, I've denied everything. I didn't want to admit I knew that I was having a slight hearing problem. I was hoping it would go away, all by itself, without doing anything about it! But, deep down inside, I knew I needed a little extra help in the hearing department, and lately, I needed this extra help more and more.

My wife was so tired of me asking her to either speak louder or repeat everything she said. We were having arguments over my hearing. Finally, she insisted that I get some help. She told me to buy a hearing aid.

Sure, just what I need. A bulky, ugly, ill-fitting and heavy hearing aid sitting behind my ear. And, the darn thing will probably rub the skin off my ear too!

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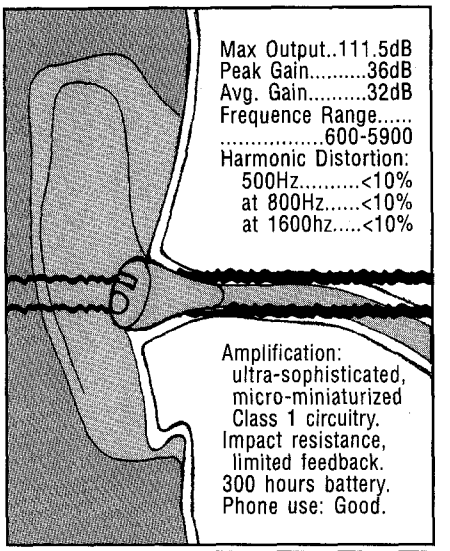

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Forget the Callas Legend

The reissued official Callas discography reveals the art that will last, which the diva's image often obscures

by Matthew Gurewitsch

DIVAS come and go. Maria Callas is forever.

That, at any rate, is how it looks now, more than two decades after her death, at fifty-three, in her lonely Paris apartment. Though her glory years at La Scala, Covent Garden, the Opéra, and the Met lie some forty years back, sales of her recordings have never flagged. Indeed, so high has her stock remained that the industry giant EMI marked its centennial, last year, with a second CD reissue of the entire Callas discography as it was originally issued on Angel LPs. The company has included several live performances of unusual fare, previously available only on entrepreneurial labels. Remastered, repackaged, and accompanied by partisan yet judicious new commentary, the EMI cache runs to some thirty complete operas (including multiple versions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Norma*, and *La traviata*, Callas specialties all), plus nearly a dozen recital discs. Unlike many vintage opera albums, which sell at budget prices, EMI's Callas titles still command top dollar.

Keepers of other flames fume about corporate greed and wish out loud that the public would light more candles for the icons they prefer: Renata Tebaldi, Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé, Beverly Sills, or the undervalued Leyla Gencer, from Turkey. But Callas was never the invention of some publicity machine. Nor is her cult—as some nay-sayers believe—the unearned dividend of her private soap opera (the ill-fated romance with Aristotle Onassis) or professional blowups (remarkably few, actually—a walkout here, a run-in there, all justified). True, in her lifetime a malicious, uncomprehending press splashed her across the front page. But at this late date all that matters is her supremacy as an artist. The danger for the future is that the legend will eclipse the work—that new generations will take her greatness on faith alone.

My favorite Callas story, and the only one I will mention here, has not to my knowledge been reported before. The source is Sandra Warfield, an American mezzo-soprano who in the early fifties walked away from a promising career at the Met and started over in Italy. Her husband, James McCracken (soon to emerge as a world-class tenore di forza), was getting nowhere back home, and she hoped that he might get his break in Europe. At lunch one day next door to La Scala the young Americans spotted Callas, whose debut in the United States was imminent. Starstruck but collegial, the couple went over to cheer her on, saying how much everyone they knew was looking forward to seeing her. La Divina looked doubtful and said, "I hope they aren't expecting too much."

A listener approaching the Callas legacy probably expects an altogether different beast. Who has not heard of Callas the tigress, of the dazzle of her coloratura,

Illustration by Vivienne Flesher

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the frequent squalls that beset her high notes? The mind pieces together a caricature of a Jezebel of the stage, chewing the scenery, goading the groundlings to a frenzy with mannerism, stopping the show with a drop-dead vocal display.

In fact the essence of her art was refinement. The term seems odd for a performer whose imagination and means of expression were so prodigious. She was eminently capable of the grand gesture; still, judging strictly from the evidence of her recordings, we know (and her few existing film clips confirm) that her power flowed not from excess but from unbroken concentration, unfaltering truth in the moment. It flowed also from irreproachable musicianship. People say that Callas would not hesitate to distort a vocal line for dramatic effect. In the throes of operatic passion plenty of singers snarl, growl, whine, and shriek. Callas was not one of them. She found all she needed in the notes.

As it happens, one of the first two opera albums I owned as a boy was her first recording for Angel: the 1953 *Lucia di Lammermoor*. (Unless noted, all recordings referred to are available on CD from EMI. The sound quality varies with the source materials but is generally state-of-the-art. Other material is obtainable on different labels, but caveat emptor: price, sound quality, and availability vary greatly.) In Donizetti's opera, derived from a romance by Sir Walter Scott, the heroine makes her entrance in a state of deep apprehension. She awaits her lover at their trysting place. She must warn him of impending peril. He is late. Adding to her dread, as she soon reveals to a confidante, is a recent brush with a ghost—the spirit of a woman stabbed by her lover and left entombed in the very fountain near which Lucia now stands. *"Quella fonte, ah!"* she cries, launching the dreadful story: "Oh, that fountain!" Who could forget the chilly stab to the heart?

Years ago I collected a wide spectrum of Callas recordings. I wore out my LPs of Cherubini's *Medea* and taped her *Carmen* (a role she never sang onstage) from the radio. In a scene that anticipated Terrence McNally's play *The Lisbon Traviata*, a friend in college played me a pirate tape of the Triumphal Scene from *Aida*, breathless with anticipation for the climactic high E-flat that Verdi never wrote. Another friend introduced me to Callas the Wagnerian, floating through Isolde's Liebestod in Italian. In the seventies I witnessed the diva herself on the stage of Boston's Symphony Hall, on her rather sad final tour. Then, for ages, her albums gathered dust on my shelves. Not until the latest EMI reissue did I attempt a comprehensive survey. Now, after playing no fewer than forty-one of Callas's complete performances in quick succession (and in purposely arbitrary order), covering all the EMI titles plus exotica from other sources, I wonder more than ever at the gap between her image and her art.

In a Callas performance no syllable of the text, no note of the score, went unexamined. Singers so attuned to dramatic nuance—there are not many—are liable to come across as nervous and infirm of purpose, like writers who italicize everything and thus stress nothing. Art means choices, as we all know: to play up A, we give up B. In defiance of this incontrovertible theory, Callas could on occasion sculpt a passage instant by instant without losing sight of her target. At the opening of Act Three of the studio recording of *Medea*, taped in 1957, she honed each word of the invocation of the gods of hell to an edge of ferocity. Her usual practice, though, was to set the mood and then place expressive accents sparingly. Lucia's frisson by the fountain was only that, and that was all it needed to be. In the part of the doomed Anne Boleyn, in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, Callas fired off bull's-eye zingers at Henry VIII, well aware that Anne is on thin ice, as the tremor in her anger showed. In the "Miserere" from *Il trovatore* she smiled at grief. The finale of *Medea*, in contrast, had to be tremendous, and so it was. In a live performance in Florence in 1953 Callas rode the last phrases as if they were tidal waves surging to the abyss. (The passage is a bonus track on the complete 1958 Dallas *Medea*, on Gala, an excellent budget label.)

However deep their gifts of sympathy and self-transformation, actors privileged to test themselves against a gallery of the great roles reveal over time the bedrock of their own hearts and souls. As the constant in Callas we discover a rare nobility, a proud, unflinching submission to fate. How apt, one might say: according to a dictum espoused notably by Puccini,

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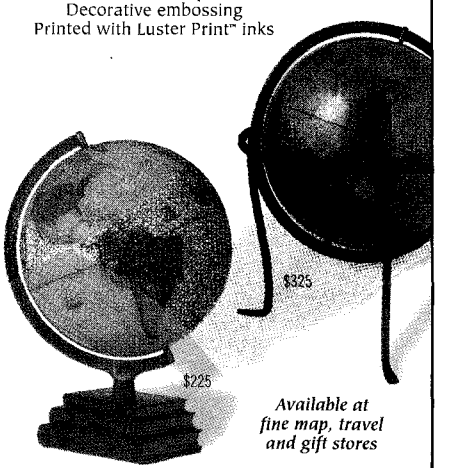

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the very essence of opera is to torture the heroine. But Callas never conveyed masochism, still less some cold-marble high-mindedness. The worlds of her heroines turn upside down in a moment, in many cases several times in short order. As Callas played them, they waste no time sniveling or frittering away their lives in second thoughts. Always her element was the unconditional.

In accordance with the practice of the time, widely frowned on at present, operatic scores were often cut, sometimes to ribbons. As a result Callas was spared the repeat of a big tune that audiences would happily have sat through twice. Even if she and her conductors did not follow the letter of the score, they were nonetheless serving the composers faithfully: what Callas expressed once, she expressed completely; to repeat would have been to diminish. In a bel canto showcase, however, where the repeat serves as a springboard for embellishment, Callas delivered. *"Ah, non giunge uman pensiero al contento ond'io son piena,"* the sleepwalker Amina sings at the close of Bellini's *La sonnambula*: "Human thought cannot encompass the joy that abounds in me." The melody is celestial the first time, but there is more to say. On the repeat the melody is still celestial, but scales ripple like streams of liquid light spilled down a staircase. From a declaration of ecstasy Callas moved to ecstasy itself.

The heroines Callas made her own do as they must and face the consequences. Medea kills. Lady Macbeth hounds her husband to murder. Forced to marry, Lucia stabs her bridegroom on their wedding night. Seduced and abandoned, Gilda, in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, takes the hit meant for her feckless lover. The courtesan of Verdi's *La traviata* is all heart; her counterpart in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* has no soul. All these women play for keeps.

On the face of it, the all-important opening scene of *La forza del destino* would seem to demand a different frame of mind, but Callas proved otherwise. In this bleakest of Verdi's creations what triggers the "force of destiny" is Leonora's indecision. On the brink of elopement, she falters. Her father is killed on the spot. Through the unrelieved gloom and loneliness of the next several years the fatal mechanism thus set in motion also crushes Leonora, her lover, and the brother she holds dear. In my experience, it is Callas alone who has made sense of the vacillations of the opening scene—and maybe the paradox is not so very deep. Leonora's fate, rooted in her nature (a Buddhist might speak of karma), is to tremble on the threshold. In this her tragedy begins. *"Fatalità! Fatalità! Fatalità!"*—Leonora repeats the word in her last aria like a mantra. After years of solitary penance she prays for peace, her heart still heavy with the burden of a forbidden love she will not disavow. Building to the epiphany, Callas streaked her sound with tears; when she reached it, a sudden break in the clouds showed Leonora catching the radiance of things as they must be.

Most mysterious among her many gifts, Callas had the genius to translate the minute particulars of a life into tone of voice. Her Cio-Cio-San, in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, is a marvel. As the child bride of the first act, Callas worked in fragile, chiming timbres that she was able to maintain even in the swelling raptures of the love duet. In Act Two a veil of grief descends, but still her voice was the voice of a child. Only in the final scene, in the prelude to Cio-Cio-San's suicide, did Callas disclose her full, tragic richness. By way of contrast, consider the final act of *La traviata*, in which Violetta hangs on by a thread, singing in blanched sounds already brushed by death. For the *thought* of death, the singer had a quite different color, audible in the second studio *Norma* (1960) and in her *Carmen*. We hear it again in the Dallas *Medea*, where Callas fulminated in cries so clipped, so dark, so wild with rage, that they scarcely seem human.

Radical adjustments of vocal weight and color have their place in comedy; in tragedy they tend to smack of indecorum, like puffy wigs or putty noses. As the self-sacrificing slave girl Liù in Puccini's *Turandot*, opposite Callas in the role of the vindictive ice princess, the eminent German stylist Elisabeth Schwarzkopf showed how wrong things can go, piping in tones of laughable lily white. But with Callas, what has been called the little-girl voice never sounds like a trick. It conjures up a heart destined to know little of life yet open to the extremes of joy and sorrow. Callas used it to advantage for quite a few young innocents: Gilda, for

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instance, and Puccini's tubercular Mimì, in *La Bohème*, whose delight is to embroider flowers. She also used it—and this was a stroke of genius—at the close of Bellini's *Norma*, of all things. A warrior priestess who has broken her vows and slept with the enemy, the heroine redeems herself in death, voluntarily joining her lover at the stake. First, though, she turns to seek the forgiveness of her father, and here, in her first studio recording of the opera, from 1954, the soprano's voice of bitter experience takes on the shy candor of a trusting child. After what Norma has lived through, the vulnerability is touching in the extreme.

PEOPLE say that Callas was not good with words. She said so herself, but it was not true. Her interviews reveal a woman who chose exactly what she meant to say. (Tosca, she offered in a fine distinction, was not "hysterical" in the first act of the opera but "nervous.") Her speech in interviews is beautifully inflected, full of personality and nuance. But she could not speak onstage. In *Macbeth* and *La traviata*, Verdi required the prima donna to read letters in prose. Here, and only here, Callas overitalicized, improvising singsong speech patterns that sound amateurish and wide-eyed. When her singing days were over, Callas made a movie of *Medea* for Pier Paolo Pasolini, and it was a disappointment: her silences were blanks, waiting for support she knew would not come. With music playing, she was never at a loss.

An interviewer once asked Callas if she changed her view of a character from performance to performance. Her dry rejoinder: "Not very much." Individual accents were born in the moment, she conceded, but the basic plan was something she worked hard for and held on to. The comment is worth keeping in mind in view of the microscopic analysis to which her performances have been subjected. Fanatics disagree over the comparative merits of pirate tapes made months, days, or even minutes apart. Of course there are lessons to be learned from close comparison. Yet to my mind, parallel bar-by-bar and note-by-note analysis dissolves the majesty of a life's achievement in a wilderness of local effects. Worse, it deflects from a crucial aspect of Callas's work: the ability to project an interpretive intention whether

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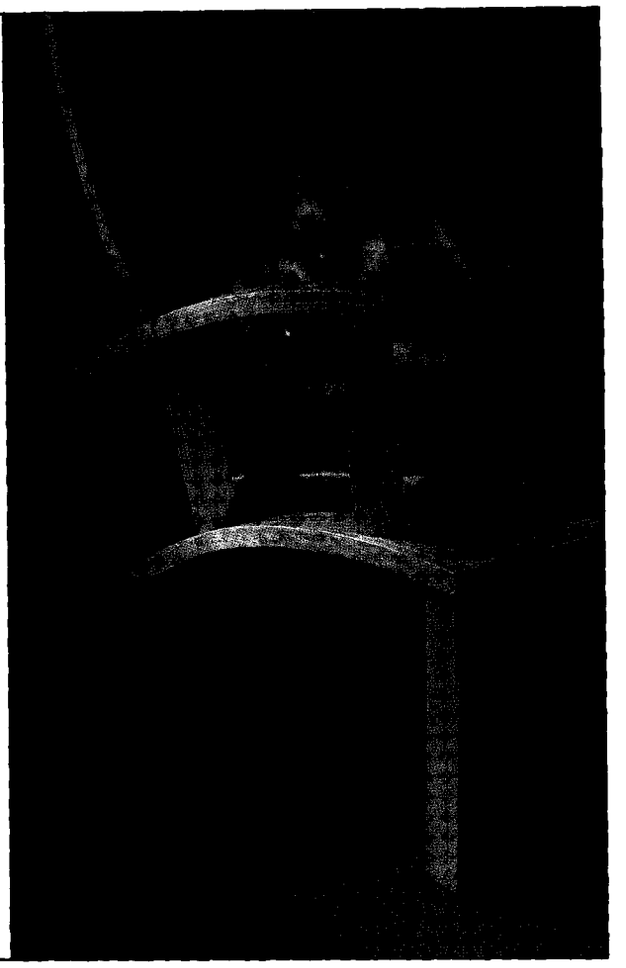

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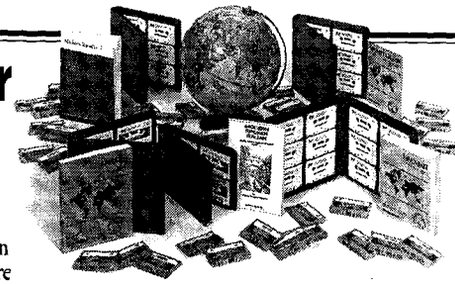

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the vocal apparatus was in perfect working order or not. In 1959, when Callas recorded Ponchielli's blood-and-thunder melodrama *La Gioconda* for Angel, the chancy line that strained from her throat when Gioconda's lover unexpectedly comes into view cannot be what Callas was aiming for. Yet what a discerning ear may register is the ethereal legato she clearly intended. Among the "official" recordings only the undersung, overacted final *Tosca* (1964) finds Callas bending her imagination to limitations in her technique.

People also say that Callas had a short career. Short? One chronicle tallies more than 600 performances of forty-one operas and operettas from April 2, 1939, to July 5, 1965. The earlier date was the debut of a fifteen-year-old student in Athens, stepping into the vocally challenging and emotionally draining part of the pregnant, excommunicated Santuzza in Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. Within two years the Royal Opera of Athens had signed her as a professional. She was put to work in the quintessential diva role of Tosca and as Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, a part of fiendish vocal difficulty that also calls on spiritual resources of the highest order. The next major phase of her career began in 1947, when she sang Gioconda at the Arena of Verona. Callas's work (by no means always abundant or to her liking, and frequently offered at the eleventh hour) then took her up and down the boot of Italy, to Sicily, to Buenos Aires, and to Mexico City. Her London debut, as Norma at Covent Garden, came in 1952 and marked her launch into the empyrean. As noted, her official discography, on Angel, began in 1953, with *Lucia di Lammermoor*; apart from recitals, it ended with the 1964 *Tosca*.

That dozen years' worth of recordings is the body of work on which La Divina's claim to immortality principally rests. But should we stop there? What we might term the study collection—the mass of live performances, recitals, rehearsals, interviews—broadens the field markedly. To my way of thinking, even the most impressive of the recitals, either live or from the studio, adds nothing essential. What counts a great deal is the full-length operas captured live, a series running all the way back to 1949. The sound quality is sometimes deplorable: the micro-

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phones are not always where one would like; at times the prompter drowns out the principals. At least one recording put me in mind of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, so gnawed by inherent defects as almost to vanish before one's eyes.

Still, allowances should be made, especially when material gaps in the original Angel discography are being filled. Some of Callas's roles—the worst loss may be her Elisabetta, in Verdi's *Don Carlos*—are unrecorded. Happily, we have her incendiary accounts of Verdi's *Nabucco* (*Last Supper* quality) and *I vespri siciliani* (both on Golden Melodram), Rossini's *Armida* (Great Opera Performances), and Wagner's *Parsifal* (Melodram), not to mention, now on EMI, Verdi's *Macbeth* and Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. Except for the Wagner, these document the singer's debut performances in roles she would perform as few as three and no more than a dozen times. Yet nothing about them suggests work in progress. As for the Wagner, it represents the only major surviving vestige of a road not taken: in her early years in Italy, Callas also ventured Isolde and the Walküre Brünnhilde. She sang Brünnhilde for the last time during the week she first appeared as Elvira, in Bellini's florid *I puritani*, after which the die was cast. Her most important role would be to revive the forgotten glory of bel canto.

The live recordings also shed light on her development as an artist. Of special interest, I think, is the material from Mexico City. An *Aida* from 1951 (Pantheon), for example, captures an artist far more conventional than the Callas we know, and the studio recording she made in 1955 places on no one's short list: quite apart from the top C in the third-act aria, which is notoriously harsh, the soprano shows no special identification with the character. I thought at first that the role was perhaps simply too schematic to have caught her imagination. But in Mexico she connected with the part as even its most admired proponents seldom do—avoiding any hint of nostalgia, going straight to the core of Aida's despair. The emotion is writ large, perhaps partly in self-defense against a cast of brazen extroverts. In Callas's *Aida*, Mexico experienced as bold, intelligent, and ambitious an opera singer as the world has ever known. Still, this was not yet the Callas who redefined her art.

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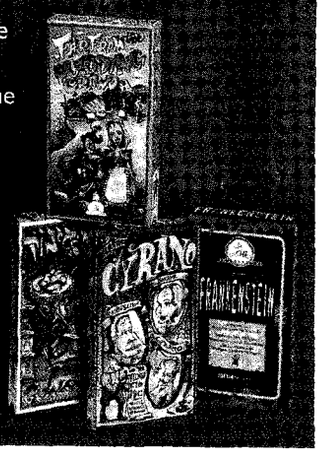

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Victimized by Arab Myths. Israel is the only country in the world whose "right to exist", has always been questioned. From its very beginning, Israel was surrounded by mortal enemies,single-mindedly obsessed with its destruction. The very day of its birth, six Arab armies invaded the newborn state. Miraculously, the invading hordes were defeated by the ragtag Israeli army.

In 1967, the same aggressors launched another attack against Israel. The Six-Day War resulted in a complete rout of the Arabs, and a victory for Israeli arms that will be studied in war colleges for centuries to come.

Unable to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, the Arabs launched a propaganda war that has been very successful, and which the Jews have clearly lost. Among the many myths propagated by the Arabs are that there is such a thing as a "Palestinian nation" (it's a concept that is not more than 40 years old); that the Israelis (Jews) are "occupiers" (if they were, who would be the sovereign that they displaced?); that Jerusalem is Islam's "third holiest city" (it's never once mentioned in the Koran, but hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible); the concept of "settlements" (with its connotation of illegality); and much more.

Israel — Utterly Vulnerable. These and other myths are what fuel the insistence of the Arabs, of most of the world, and, yes, also of the United States, that Israel allow itself to be dismembered. All concerned know well that Israel would be utterly indefensible, at the mercy of its implacable enemies, if it were to divest itself of the Jordan Valley, of the "West Bank", of the Gaza Strip, and of the Golan Heights. Why then does the world insist that Israel make itself so utterly vulnerable? Does anybody really believe that the "Palestinians", or any of the Arabs, would be appeased, even if Israel were to yield everything, except perhaps Tel Aviv and its suburbs? Everybody knows the answer. It would be an emphatic "NO", because the very existence of Israel, in whatever reduced territory, is an intolerable insult to the Muslim Arabs, for whom Israel must be rubbed out regardless of the sacrifices to be brought.

> "By its pious insistence on 'justice for the Palestinians' and pursuit of the 'peace process', by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust."

Why does the world focus on the spurious claims of the "Palestinians", an artificially created nationality that never in recorded history had an identity or country of their own? Why is there no clamor that the French and Spanish give an independent country to their Basque minorities? How about the Kurds? How about the Tibetans; and so many others? Nobody cares. Nobody wants to "liberate" them. It's only the Jews who are being asked to dismember their tiny country, less than half of the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The Arab countries (and Iran) are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only—namely the destruction of Israel. Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities, and millions of Arab casualties, would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them, it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered, with five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, can anybody really doubt that a second Holocaust, even more terrible than the first one, is just about upon us? By its pious insistence on "justice for the Palestinians" and pursuit of the "peace process", by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust. Deep down inside, does the world really want the Jews to live or to disappear?

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A FEW years later she lost weight. Before, she looked like an opera singer. After, she looked like Maria Callas. (At her gala debut in Paris in 1958—a program consisting of concert excerpts plus the fully staged second act of *Tosca*, performed before an audience including the President of the French Republic, Brigitte Bardot, and who knows who else—her deep dark eyes, straight nose, upswept coiffure, and classic couture brought to mind the elegance of Audrey Hepburn; the live telecast is preserved as an EMI video.) Some speculate that the diet took a toll on her voice, leaving her with the frayed, unsteady high notes unkind listeners say could peel paint. Those whose ears are sharper know that her vocal problems started much earlier. But dwelling on her flaws, such as they were, is futile. They are beyond fixing.

More to the point is a different question: Did her self-transformation signal a transformation in her art? I think it did. In her international career, starting just about at the time of the studio *Lucia* of 1953 and two years after that Mexico City *Aida*, Callas not only went the limit with her own roles but learned to irradiate the entire world of any opera she appeared in. Donizetti's masterpiece could never again be dismissed as an old-fashioned exercise for canaries. Within the formal delight of coloratura arabesques and roulades Callas revealed imaginative expression, limitless and breathtakingly precise. Perhaps even more remarkable, her romantic glow gave substance to the sheer fantasy of Bellini's *La sonnambula* and *I puritani*. Her skipping staccato ascents in Bellini, no less than her heartsick, noble legato, unlock realms of sentiment we think we are too sophisticated to believe in, let alone experience. Though tragedy was her medium, her grasp of comedy was no less humane and complete.

Opera is a collaborative art. Without a handful of conductors and directors who recognized what Callas had to offer, she could never have transcended the medium as she did. When she was lucky, the accomplishments of colleagues onstage—though sometimes in stark contrast to her own—served the ends Callas strove for too. But among singers she had no peer.

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Against Inequality

A valiant proposal to give every American twenty-one-year-old the same chance to prosper (or fail)

by Jack Beatty

THE STAKEHOLDER SOCIETY

by Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott. Yale University Press, 308 pages, $26.00.

PUT your social-engineering hats on. The problem to be wrestled with is the new inequality—the increasing income, wealth, and opportunity gap, not between the rich and the poor but between the rich and the rest of us. Charles Handy, the British social thinker, describes what is emerging as "the 80/20 society," dramatic shorthand for the nascent carve-up of life chances. Census statistics put this development beyond debate—and here I rely heavily on the research gathered by Frank Levy, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in his important new book, *The New Dollars and Dreams*. Whereas the median U.S. family income grew by 37 percent from 1949 to 1959 and by 41 percent in the 1960s, it grew by only 6.8 percent over the next two decades, with 97 percent of the increase since 1979 going to the top 20 percent of families. And the concentration of recent prosperity is narrower yet: as late as the 1970s the top one percent held 13 percent of the wealth; in 1995 it held 38.5 percent. Nearer the other end of the income scale, male high school graduates employed in services saw their median earnings fall from $34,000 in 1979 to $26,500 in 1996; those in manufacturing suffered a similar decline, from $37,500 to $29,500. Young and older men with college degrees also lost ground. The only group that saw its real income grow was men thirty-five to forty-four with college degrees. In 1997 the median family income, $43,200, was $400 below what it had been at the start of the decade.

How have American families managed to get by in the era of the new inequality? Sue Shellenbarger has reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that since 1969, according to the Census Bureau, "Working wives [have] contributed 23 percentage points of the 25% increase in family income, adjusted for inflation."

In the past two years the long nineties expansion has finally reached the "bottom" 80 percent, giving a fillip to average wages, especially to the wages of minorities. A few good quarters are not necessarily evidence of a trend, however, particularly since one can point to signs of a countertrend: for example, that there were more layoffs in 1998 than in any year since 1993, when "downsizing" decimated whole ranks of middle management. The new inequality is unlikely to be reversed by a global market that remorselessly bids most wages down: according to 1994 figures, American garment workers made $7.53 an hour, competing against Bangladeshi workers making twenty-five cents an hour; American steel workers made $13 an hour,

Illustrations by Jonathan Carlson

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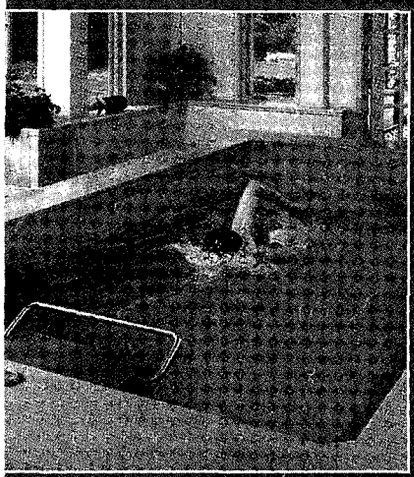

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competing against Brazilian workers making $1.28. Inequality needs to be reversed not alone for the sake of economic justice, never much of an American cause, but for stability. Unequal incomes, says Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, are potentially "a major threat to our security." The many cannot be expected to long endure, Lester Thurow has written, a system that works only for the few. The challenge is to democratize prosperity without sacrificing economic dynamism, every bit of which is needed to raise incomes, living standards, and fulfillable hopes.

The most comprehensive analysis I have seen of how we got to the point where observers with no vested interest in gloom can speak of an emerging 80/20 society is a 1996 essay, "Toward an Apartheid Economy?," by Richard B. Freeman, a Harvard economist, in the *Harvard Business Review*. Freeman critically reviewed the leading hypothesized causes of the new inequality: trade, immigration, the drop in union membership from 30 percent of the private-sector work force in the 1960s to 11 percent in the 1990s, the fall in the real value of the minimum wage, the advent of job-threatening information technology, and the influx of women into the job market since the 1960s. There is no consensus on the weight to give these or other factors, he found, and even if there were, it would not help much in reversing inequality. "That is because," he wrote,

> there is no necessary link between the causes of a problem and potential cures. When someone has myopia, a largely genetic disease, we cure it with glasses or contact lenses. We do not mess with the genes, although they may be the root cause.

To apply this medical analogy to the economy, if trade is a cause of the new inequality, should we erect protective tariffs to deal with it? "No," Freeman wrote. "Protective tariffs are one of the most inefficient ways to redistribute income that the mind of man has ever conceived." If technology is a cause, should we smash our computers? Only if we have lost our minds. The significant question is not how the new inequality originated but what to do about it now.

Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, both professors at Yale Law School, also accept the causes of the new inequality as reversible only at an incalculable economic price. In *The Stakeholder Society* they address the question of how to increase equality of opportunity *within* a system through which inequality is marbled—in which, perversely, inequality appears to have become a condition of economic dynamism. (Freeman offers a suggestive illustration of that last dark point: "If I am rich and you are poor, I can hire you cheaply as my gardener, maid, or nanny" and invest the money saved on your wages in a high-growth hedge fund.) Part political theory, part policy argument of an intricacy that only obsession demands, *The Stakeholder Society* risks the scorn that often greets new ideas. American business worships change, but in intellectual life novelty threatens the franchises of the familiar. Policy advocates dig in behind a position, often get funding to subsidize it, and, rightly, see new ideas—new ways of conceiving of *their* problem—as daggers to their jobs. Also, much political, social, and economic wisdom is a memory of failure—a record of how ideas miscarried. Indeed, neo-conservatism, that contemporary school of polemics, rests on the bleak verity that because the unintended consequences of ideas often undo their purposed good, society is probably better off on balance without them. The resistance to change among the intellectual guilds militates against a fair hearing for this book, whose central idea is anyway ripe for ridicule.

That idea is to guarantee, as a matter of fundamental right, $80,000 to every U.S. citizen at his or her twenty-first birthday. "Our plan," the authors write,

> seeks justice by rooting it in capitalism's preeminent value: the importance of private property. It points the way to a society that is more democratic, more productive, and more free. Bear with us, and you will see how a single innovation once proposed by Tom Paine can achieve what a thousand lesser policies have failed to accomplish.

The stake would disproportionately benefit those the sum of whose wages can never add up to wealth, especially blacks. Two-earner black families now roughly equal white families in income, but there is a growing wealth gap between the races, and this will only deepen as the parents of Baby Boomers pass on their

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money and property to their children.

Why twenty-one? Because young adults must face decisions about love and work in pinched circumstances that cloud judgment and narrow choice. The authors call this "the false promise of maturity." Conceding that some will squander their stake, they want young adults to have a taste of economic freedom when so much—buying a house, starting a business, paying for a college education—can be done with it. "Too many forty-year-olds look back to their twenties with bitter regret at the chances that they never had," they write, "but that were readily available to others higher up on the economic scale." Is it fair, they ask, that even children with the winds of family and class already behind them should receive federal scholarships and state-subsidized tuitions, while the 75 percent of young people who do not graduate from a four-year college "are tossed gently into the marketplace unaided"?

The authors' sympathies, commendably, are with the plight of blue- and pink-collar workers in an economy convinced that job competence is predicted by years in school, not character or performance—an economy in which, Peter Drucker has observed, J. P. Morgan, "a college dropout," would never have got past the door of the bank that still bears his name. College is the great leveler in American society; college graduates less lucky in their birth earn about as much as those born luckier. ("Merit" is luck in slow motion.) The chance to enter college, however, is distributed as unequally as the chance to attend a good suburban high school: "51% of students from the top quarter of the economic hierarchy earn bachelor's degrees, compared to 22 percent of middle-status students and only 7.2 percent in the lowest socioeconomic quartile." The authors don't propose to stop the machinery of inequality that has produced this result—only to "shift the balance of regret" in favor of those most harmed by its capricious grindings.

Why a stake of $80,000? Because that is the average price of a college education today; the college-bound, consequently, could collect their stake starting at age eighteen. The authors rule out means testing, on both practical—$80,000 is a lot of money for all but the heirs of great fortunes—and political grounds. And (the bad news) the money must be paid back,

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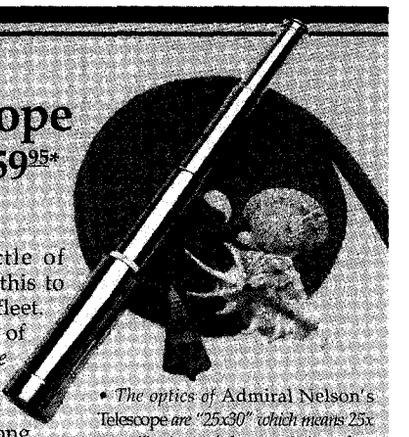

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with interest, at death, making stakeholding programmatically sustainable.

Eighty thousand dollars, or even a couple's pooled $160,000, won't do more than mitigate inequality—won't raise the wages of service workers or revitalize the unions or restore manufacturing jobs. But mitigation may be the best we can do in any case, absent a global New Deal to raise wages and labor standards in the sweatshop economies of the developing world. The aim of liberalism, one of its proponents has well said, should be to "hinder hindrances"—whether from nature or from society—that abridge freedom. Stakeholding would clearly hinder the hindrances of the new inequality.

The stake would not only increase individual freedom, in the sense of economic freedom. It would also promote community, social obligation, and national loyalty. These values can be realized together, the authors argue, without sacrificing one to another. Isaiah Berlin spent his career arguing that these values are not reconcilable, and that the attempt to reconcile them can lead (and has led) to tyranny. Communitarians will object that a paid-for loyalty is no loyalty at all. Libertarians will combust over the taxes needed to fund the stake, contending that they will inhibit economic growth.

The taxes would be substantial—the program would cost another defense budget—and they would fall heavily on those slightly better off and above. "An annual wealth tax of 2 percent should suffice to fund stakeholding completely," Ackerman and Alstott aver. "The wealth of America is distributed so unequally that stakeholding can be financed by a tax that hits only the top 41 percent, with the top 20 percent contributing 93 percent of the total." The exactitude of these percentages is both representative (the authors nail down every detail, trying to meet every objection) and poignant. Putting the finishing touches on the politically inconceivable, the authors seem to be fine-tuning their Nobel Prize acceptance speech after writing their first letter home from camp.

Yet the objection from impossibility rests on the frightening assumption that today's shrunken political debate should bound the horizon of thought. The smart money, after all, was once against Christianity, self-government, and Social Security. Possibility cannot be hostage to the content of Trent Lott's brain. The new century needs political and social innovation even more than it needs business innovation. The authors have done well what intellectuals are supposed, but are seldom bold enough, to do—innovate ideas about important social issues. Those of us who share the former senator Bill Bradley's perception that American politics is "broken" will increasingly seek solutions to the new inequality in the private sector, where, as it happens, the concept of stakeholding is getting an unexpected hearing. Understood as employee participation in corporate ownership, stakeholding is a major incentive to the high-performance employees of many of the new high-tech start-ups embraced so exuberantly on Wall Street. But widespread corporate stakeholding faces huge obstacles. Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott still believe in a public-sector solution to the problem of the new inequality, in what Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. has called "the politics of remedy." If their $80,000 stake is not the path to greater equality of opportunity, the burden is on their critics to say what is.

Poet of the Factory Floor

by Peter Davison

THE MERCY: Poems

by Philip Levine. Knopf, 80 pages, $22.00.

PHILIP Levine's poetry has been steadily moving to the front rank of American poetry for three decades. Unlike a vast quantity of the poetry of those years, his has never fallen out. It contains elements unique to him—not only a very special personal history but also a particular view of American life. If Walt Whitman's vision contained multitudes, and if Emerson's vision of nature transcended what it saw with its own eyes,

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Levine's poetic vision, nearly religious, transcends class, transcends natural boundaries, and transcends time.

The title poem in his new book, *The Mercy* (his eighteenth collection), describes how Levine's mother in 1913 crossed the Atlantic to Ellis Island. Her ship, the *Mercy*, was held for a month in smallpox quarantine in New York harbor, where a Scottish sailor gave the girl a bite of an orange and taught her the name of this exotic fruit.

> A nine-year-old girl
> travels
> all night by train with one suitcase
> and an orange.
> She learns that mercy is something
> you can eat
> again and again while the juice
> spills over
> your chin, you can wipe it away with
> the back
> of your hands and you can never
> get enough.

Born in Detroit in 1928, Levine grew up and was educated there, and he stayed on, working at jobs in factories. Places like Chevy Gear & Axle, Leo's Tool & Die, Dodge Main, Woodward Avenue, Hamtramck, and River Rouge stud the surface of his poetry like jewels. Levine cherishes the intimate glow of alienation that industrial work imposes as a condition of labor.

> There is no
> photograph, no mystery,
> only Salt and Oil
> in the daily round of the world,
> three young men in dirty work clothes
> on their way under a halo
> of torn clouds and famished
> city birds.
> There is smoke and grease, there is
> the wrist's exhaustion, there is
> laughter, . . .

Though *The Mercy* culminates Levine's productive poetic career, this volume of thirty-seven poems revisits themes he began with forty years ago and gathers in ones he has developed since: Detroit and working men and women; Spain and the aspiration toward anarchism that inspirited the Spanish Civil War: California, New York, and other American regions where Levine has spent the greater part of his life teaching the art of poetry. Wherever Levine's poems take root, they blossom into vision: in "Angel Butcher," written nearly thirty years ago, he addresses an angel (possibly the twin brother who now and then puts in an appearance in his poems) who works next to the speaker in a slaughterhouse.

> . . . I hear
> my breathing double
> and he's beside me smiling
> like a young girl. . . .

> He asks
> me how I came to this place and
> this work, and I tell him how
> I began with animals, and
> he tells me how
> he began with animals. We
> talk about growing up and losing
> the strange things we never
> understood and settling.

This abattoir seems to stand for industrial work of any kind, work that Levine tells us he deliberately chose as a young man. He has never turned his back on it, though he moved away from Detroit after only about half a dozen years of full-time industrial labor. In *The Bread of Time* (1994), a wonderfully direct yet evocative book of autobiographical essays, he speaks of how he came to his poetic vision of labor.

> When I closed my eyes and looked back into the past, I did not see the blazing color of the forges of nightmare or the torn faces of the workers. I didn't hear the deafening ring of metal on metal, or catch under everything the sweet stink of decay. Not on that morning. Instead I was myself in the company of men and women of enormous sensitivity, delicacy, consideration. . . . In those terrible places designed to rob us of our bodies and our spirits, we sustained each other.

In other poems and essays he speaks, too, of the visions evoked in the Spanish countryside, where he managed to spend sabbatical years with his wife and three sons, and to learn enough Spanish to comprehend the poetry of the great Spanish poet Antonio Machado.

> I delight to imagine Machado at his evening walk. . . . The air deepens and stills in the fields; time stops. Something like a vision rises in the golden dust of sunset, a vision of a world sweet enough to welcome the human heart freed from vanity and greed. I delight to imagine Antonio Machado alive in a world of others as

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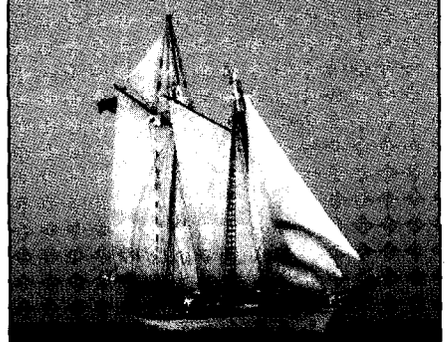

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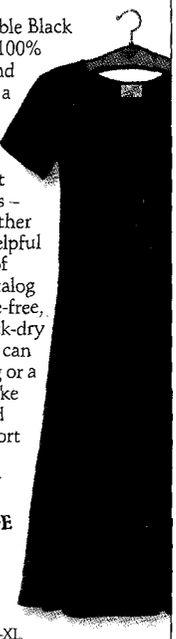

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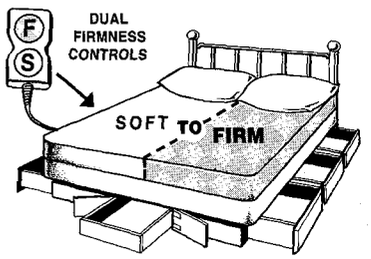

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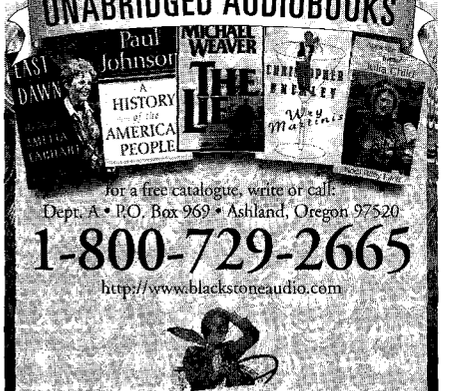

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good as he, a world as glorious as the simple language he found to create it.

Levine's poetry moves with quiet confidence into a language as pure and lucid as Machado's. Not that such language is new to him. In all the years since he first encountered the simplicity of Machado and William Carlos Williams, he has continuously cleansed his way of speaking. In books of poetry including *What Work Is* (1991) and *The Simple Truth* (1994) he dedicated and rededicated himself to the understanding of two regions over which American poetry only hesitantly lingers: the nature of work, and the evidence of the senses. These two books won, respectively, the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize—which goes to prove that not all prizes reach the undeserving. In the former book he wrote,

> These are the children of Flint, their fathers
> work at the spark plug factory or truck
> bottled water in 5 gallon sea-blue jugs
> to the widows of the suburbs. You can see
> already how their backs have thickened,
> how their small hands, soiled by pig iron,
> leap and stutter even in dreams.

In the latter he eased the burden of intensity even more.

> Some things
> you know all your life. They are so simple and true
> they must be said without elegance, meter and rhyme,
> they must be laid on the table beside the salt shaker,
> the glass of water, the absence of light gathering
> in the shadows of picture frames, they must be
> naked and alone, they must stand for themselves.

Now Levine has reached the age of seventy-one; in *The Mercy* he writes about the sort of understanding that age does most to endow—the need to accept the finality of the passage of time. In "The Return," my favorite among the poems in this volume (it appeared first in this magazine), the poet speaks of trying to follow in the footsteps of his father, long dead: "I considered but decided to go alone,/determined to find what he had never found." And in "The

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Secret" he writes of the death of his mother at a great age.

> When you lived the secret
> was yourself. You gave away
> hours, days, years, 94 in all,
> but never that. Your secret
> is safe tonight. The earth turns
> toward darkness, and the earth
> asks nothing.

As the poet ages, he ages into elegy. The wildness of early discovery gradually transmutes into a broader and calmer understanding and, finally, rises to face what we have no choice but to accept: the eternity of the earth and of aspiration, the permanence of breath and of hope. There is in this acceptance only a sort of delight in the fact that things are as they are, and that the world continues, with us or without us.

> If you asked
> the sources of his glee he would shrug
> his thick shoulders and roll his eyes
> upward to where the turning leaves
> take the wind, and the gray city birds
> dart toward their prey, and flat clouds
> pencil their obscure testaments
> on the air.

The many passages I have quoted from Philip Levine's masterly poems give evidence, over and over again, that the most complete way to discover and understand the content of infinity and permanence is through the agency of our miraculous tool, the senses. Listen to the sound of those lines just above and notice how our senses are urged toward understanding, either through the actual words or by their sound—especially by the motion of the verbs as they *shrug* those thick shoulders, as the leaves *take* the wind, as the birds *dart* toward their prey, and the clouds *pencil* their testaments. Where? On the air, of course. Where can more infinite a picture be penciled?

Philip Levine's vision of the American city may on its surface appear grim, yet there are always flowers blooming in the empty lots and along the half-deserted avenues. Poets are enabled to notice such things. In speaking of his childhood in Detroit, Levine writes of "the quiet world I left behind years ago."

> How ordinary
> it all was, the dawn breaking each
> morning, dusk
> arriving on time just as the lights
> of houses

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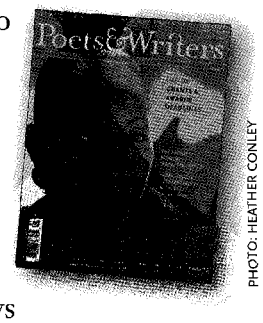

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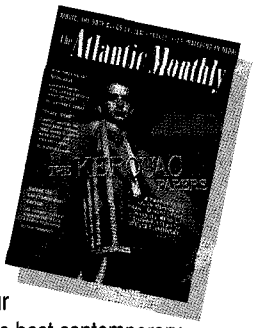

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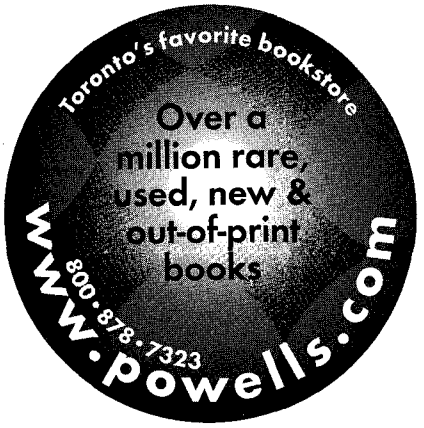

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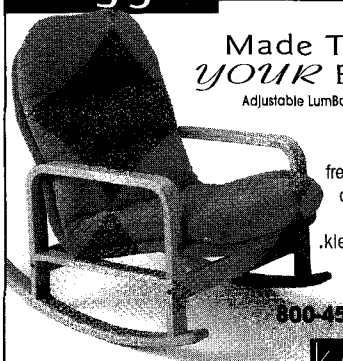

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came softly on. Why can't I ever
let it go?

Ordinary, you say? Not on your tintype. Nor is the following passage from a longish poem titled "Joe Gould's Pen," which sets out to describe the aspiration of Joe Gould, the famous street hero who spent his life in New York in a vain attempt to record the oral history of his times. "Everyone has a story," Levine writes, and here is Joe Gould's, which may stand for the inevitable failure that all poets know, penciling testaments on the air as they do.

He carried his swollen books
in a cardboard folder stained
with black coffee and clutched
to his chest as though they were
his own life. Perhaps they were.
Perhaps he knew that when
he gave back the last hard breath
each earned word would disappear
the way the golden halo
goes when the dawn shreds the rose
into dust, the way a voice fades
in an empty room, the way
the pomegranate fallen from
the tree scatters the seeds of
its resurrection, the way
these lines are vanishing now.

BRIEF REVIEWS

The Peacock Room

by Linda Merrill.
Freer Gallery of Art/Yale,
406 pages, $65.00.

The Peacock Room, a masterpiece of interior decoration, explosively ended James Whistler's association with his previously generous and patient patron, Frederick Leyland. The row was noisy at the time and has given rise to speculation, interpretation, legend, anecdote, and publications ever since. Ms. Merrill's publication proposes to sort myth from fact and also to describe the development of Whistler's aesthetic theories and working techniques, relating both to the progress of art in late-nineteenth-century Britain and France. The text is serious and full of information, but it takes a long time to get to the peacock fight. When one does, the affair has a curiously modern ring. Whistler had been given an unspecific commission and left to carry it out with no direct observation by Leyland. The result was far more elaborate than Leyland had expected; he did not appreciate the magical gold and blue birds, and the cost overrun was worthy of the Pentagon—if the Pentagon had been available for comparison. Leyland refused to pay full price. Whistler went broke but in a way had the last word in the dispute, for Leyland is remembered as the man who did not recognize a masterpiece in his own dining room. The masterpiece now resides in the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Art, where it is steadily admired by visitors. The book is illustrated generously if not always effectively—a three-dimensional room cannot be reduced to a flat page.

The Return of Little Big Man

by Thomas Berger.
Little Brown, 432 pages,
$25.00.

Jack Crabb, alias Little Big Man, the protagonist of an earlier novel by Mr. Berger, reappears to continue his memoirs, which broke off with the battle of the Little Big Horn. Jack is now aged 112, with mind and memory as clear as ever. His recollections start with the murder of Wild Bill Hickok and end at the Chicago World's Fair. Along the way Jack meets every great figure of western lore, with a few unavoidable nonentities thrown in. Mr. Berger's knowledge of frontier his-

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tory is formidable. His ability to convert it into intriguing fiction derives from the narrator he has invented. Jack is a relative of Huckleberry Finn—an intelligent observer whose lack of formal education leaves his mind unhampered by sentimental clichés and conventional assumptions. Jack sees events from unexpected angles, making old tales look new.

Mr. Dimock Explores the Mysteries of the East

by Edward Cameron Dimock. Algonquin, 224 pages, $18.95.

The author is a distinguished authority on Indian religions and a translator of Bengali literature. He has spent much time in India. In this collection of essays he recalls only the comic or pleasant experiences, and there were many of both in that vast and varied country. The episodes are reported with unpretentious charm, while the author's occasional excursions into linguistic or philosophical questions add to the interest of his text—an unusual accomplishment in scholarly writing.

An Elegant Madness

by Venetia Murray. Viking, 317 pages, $29.95.

Ms. Murray's study of "High Society in Regency England" is not revisionist history. The period she covers (1788–1830) was one of hedonism, extravagant display, sexual irresponsibility, vulgar ostentation, and gluttony (the menu for one royal dinner covers three pages). There were numerous fads, from the folly of Cossack pants to the worthy enthusiasm for clean cravats. Ms. Murray provides specific details on the doings of dandies, prostitutes, influential hostesses, and tearful politicians. Weeping was a habit of the time. So were letter writing and the keeping of journals, often by people who took pains to write well and wittily. Spelling and punctuation might have been a bit ad-lib, but what does that matter when the material is fascinating? Ms. Murray has clearly enjoyed collecting this mass of gaudy trivialities, and anyone with a taste for informal history will enjoy reading it. The period produced splendidly mischievous cartoonists, whose work adds to the pleasure of the text.

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Rules: No purchase necessary. Print your name, address, and solution to the Puzzler on a postcard. Mail entry to *The Atlantic Monthly*, Puzzler Contest, 77 North Washington St., Boston, MA 02114. You must send the correct Puzzler solution to the April 1999 Puzzler to be eligible to win. Entries must be received no later than midnight on April 15, 1999. One entry per person. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. One prize of a Zingerman's gift certificate (retail value $150.00) will be awarded based on a random drawing from among the correct entries. By acceptance of prize, winner consents to announcement of winner's name and the use of name and/or likeness and entry material submitted in any manner and in any medium for advertising/promotion without further compensation unless prohibited by law. Contest is open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, except the Province of Quebec, age 21 and over, and is subject to complete rules. For complete rules, send an SASE to *The Atlantic Monthly* at the above address.

ANSWERS TO THE MARCH PUZZLER

C	A	V	O	R	T	S	P	A	D	E	S
O	S	E	R	G	E	I	S	R	L	B	A
A	S	I	A	N	X	D	I	E	O	U	T
S	U	N	L	I	T	L	G	A	B	L	E
T	B	W	E	E	T	E	N	F	O	L	D
S	P	O	I	L	P	F	O	L	K	I	B
F	O	R	B	E	A	R	M	E	D	E	A
R	E	B	O	I	L	T	E	N	A	N	T
U	N	S	R	B	F	A	T	C	A	T	S
M	A	Y	A	N	R	G	R	A	H	A	M
P	E	O	N	I	E	S	I	S	E	AU	E
Y	D	I	T	Z	Y	I	C	E	M	A	N

"Hide and Seek"

The hiders (shaded in the answer grid) are WEE FOLK: *brownie, pixie, leprechaun, fairy, gnome, elf, and kobold. The leprechaun also holds a box of gold* (AU). *Across.* 1. CAVORT (anag.) 5. SPADES (double def.) 9. SERGE + I 12. AS + I(A)N 14. D(I)E OUT (*due to* anag.) 15. S + UN(L)IT 16. G + ABLE 17. TENFO + LD (*often* anag.) 18. S(P)OIL 23. FOR + BEAR 24. MEDEA (hidden) 26. REB + OIL 27. TEN(AN)T 29. FAT CATS (anag.) 31. MAY + AN (rev.) 32. GR + A + HAM 33. P(EON)IES 34. DIT(Z)Y (*tidy* anag.) 35. ICEMAN (anag.) *Down.* 1. COA(S)TS 2. V(E)IN 3. (m)ORAL 4. TEX + T 5. S + IDLE 6. ARE + A 7. E(BULL)IENT (*tee in* anag.) 8. S(I)ATE + D 10. SI(G)N 11. LOB + O 13. S(U + BPOE)NAED (*deans* rev.) 19. ORBS (even letters) 20. L(EIBN)IZ (*be-in* anag.) 21. P(A + L + F)REY 22. BA(TSME)N (*Mets* anag.) 23. FR(UMP)Y 24. METRIC (anag.) 25. E(NC)ASE 28. RAN + T 30. A + HEM

The Dragon Hunt

by Tran Vu, translated by Nina McPherson and Phan Huy Duong. Hyperion, 160 pages, $21.00.

The author left Vietnam at the age of sixteen for life in France. The first story in this collection is realistic and autobiographical—a chilling account of the miseries endured by refugees aboard an overcrowded boat aground on a coral reef. The other stories have to do with refugees isolated in a strange country and with war survivors in Vietnam, where the author has visited more than once. He describes a formerly prosperous town where buildings survive but most of the people have left as looking "like a corpse someone had laid out but forgotten to bury." The title story is a savage summary of Vietnam's long and bloody history. It drifts in and out of fantasy and legend, old enmities resurface, and brutality is wildly misdirected. The stories are not pleasant but they are well written and impressive for the author's ability to compress large-scale realities into concisely imagined metaphorical situations.

Winston and Clementine

edited by Mary Soames. Houghton Mifflin, 768 pages, $35.00.

Throughout their life together Sir Winston and Lady Churchill exchanged letters whenever they were separated. These private letters, expertly edited by their youngest daughter, evoke times and places and people, the characters of both correspondents, and above all a warm and lasting love. In the midst of wartime conferences Winston managed to get off lively reports to Clementine, who responded with messages of affection and support to whatever alias the military telegraph required. There are notable bits scattered throughout. In 1925 Winston observed, "It is now a convention that foreign affairs are only to be treated in unctuous platitudes wh [sic] bear no relation to what is really going on. This is called 'Open diplomacy'." The notes and connecting passages provided by Ms. Soames do effective service and are often sharp and funny. They should not be skipped.

—*Phoebe-Lou Adams*

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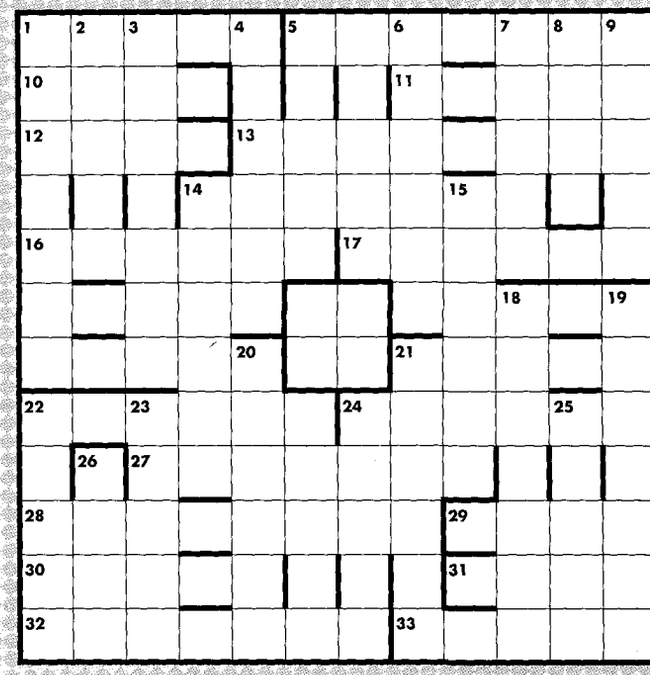
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Mystery Box

To find out what's in the central box, solve the set of Box clues (a–h) and determine where their answers belong in the diagram, using the Acrosses and Downs as guides. Each square of the central box has two of these 5-letter Box words abutting it; for example, the lower-right square is abutted by 21 Across and 24 Down. Every such pair of Box words will combine to suggest a single letter, and the central box's four resulting letters will spell a word. To enter this month's contest, write the word on a postcard and mail it to *The Atlantic* (see facing page). Clue answers include eleven capitalized words.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 114.



Across

1. Make a slip in conversation with some Europeans (5)
5. Coin put back in a note about mercury (7)
10. Spread out in front of "Fire" sign (4)
11. Pass out quite a few times when you're speaking (5)
12. Talk about smoker's ultimate habit (4)
13. Fourth stone cut on island in the Seine? (8)
14. Asian back massage before month in Italy (7)
16. Bully that is grabbing collector's last shell (6)
17. Characteristic beliefs about northern cultural group (6)
22. Talks lovingly about small world (6)
24. Site on the west coast lacks a fix (6)
27. Hillbilly dad clumsily handles fruits (7)
28. Articles mom damned (8)
29. Fine and rare: a gumbo ingredient (4)
30. Wrong part of the Ukraine, mostly (5)
31. Souvenirs of a vacation don't work for the audience (4)
32. Scotsman's known club president (7)
33. Audibly get lower in harmony (5)

Down

1. Fighter in neighborhood following a reasonable course (7)
2. Site of a siege, according to medical officer (5)
3. Swine, getting outside of fencing material, turned fancy locks (7)
4. Reportedly look for and acquire a shiny ornament (6)
6. Arthur's nephew edited the rag (6)
7. Be found abducted by an entity in a UFO? (5)
8. Solo almost up in jazz standard (4)
9. Articles in thermos considered oddly (5)
14. Composer, nearly a god (6)
15. Pictures capturing American youngsters in pens (6)
18. A French lacrosse team holds a thousand dollars not claimed (7)
19. Landscape's last two trees in *moonshine* (7)
20. Flier before shout expressing excitement (6)
21. Brand of alcohol was red, strangely (6)
22. Expert remark designed to get a laugh (5)
23. Get dizzy about a land on a peninsula (5)
25. Fifty-one cents covers your poem (5)
26. Rein flopping about (2,2)

Box

a. Issue involving chief of police and amphetamine (5)
b. Cahn, for example, eating M & M (5)
c. Mild insult after the inauguration (5)
d. Wetter outside of university dwelling (5)
e. Basic structure of iron absorbing force (5)
f. Glover in Mobile and New York (5)
g. Bird I stuck in a truck (5)
h. Like the sky, as you're told? (5)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

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WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

flyball *noun*, a relay race involving two teams of four dogs, each dog being required to jump several hurdles and catch and return with a tennis ball obtained by hitting a spring-loaded box door: "On a night traditionally set aside for gallivanting about town, these avid animal lovers have a standing date with their pets. They're here [in a warehouse] to practice *flyball*, the fastest-growing sport in the dog world" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: *Flyball* began in California during the late 1970s. It has since gained popularity across the United States and Canada, especially in recent years. Now there is a North American *Flyball* Association (founded in 1985), and there are more than 300 registered *flyball* clubs—triple the number in existence just seven years ago. Some 7,000 dogs of a variety of breeds are currently registered to compete. Their owners transport them to matches in much the same way that some parents take children to participate in sports—traveling for hours, if need be, and staying in motels. Dogs can earn *personal points* if their team finishes the relay within a specified time, winning such titles as *Flyball Master* (5,000 points) and *Flyball Grand Champion* (30,000 points).

marketplace *noun*, a bank lobby in which customers can engage in nonbanking transactions, such as dropping off dry cleaning and buying refreshments: "In an effort to generate rent money and keep customers satisfied, Wells Fargo has transformed a handful of branches into *'marketplaces'* that mix financial services with retailing. . . . One consequence of the . . . *'marketplace'* is that visitors use the building after the bank has closed for the day" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: With the proliferation of ATMs and online banking, many older bank lobbies, quite spacious and originally intended to accommodate a large number of face-to-face transactions, are underused, if not deserted. Their transformation into *marketplaces*—a new sense of a word that goes back to the fourteenth century—comes in response to the increasingly busy lives of today's customers, who are eager to bundle multiple errands into a single trip. Ironically, the new *marketplaces* represent a reversal of sorts of another relatively recent banking trend—locating ATMs in venues, such as hotel lobbies and supermarkets, that were designed for nonbanking uses.

mitigation specialist *noun*, a member of a criminal-defense team who gathers detailed background material about the defendant in order to persuade a jury not to impose the death penalty: "Increasingly, lawyers defending death-penalty cases rely heavily on *mitigation specialists*" (*U.S. News & World Report*).

BACKGROUND: Though both the term and the job are probably no older than the current decade, printed evidence of both has steadily accrued, making the term a likely candidate for entry in future dictionaries. A *mitigation specialist* has been described as a kind of social historian who delves into the defendant's past to unearth circumstances—childhood abuse, for example—that might be used to paint a sympathetic picture and sway a jury toward leniency. A recent case in which a *mitigation specialist* was at work, seemingly with some success, is the trial of Terry Nichols in connection with the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

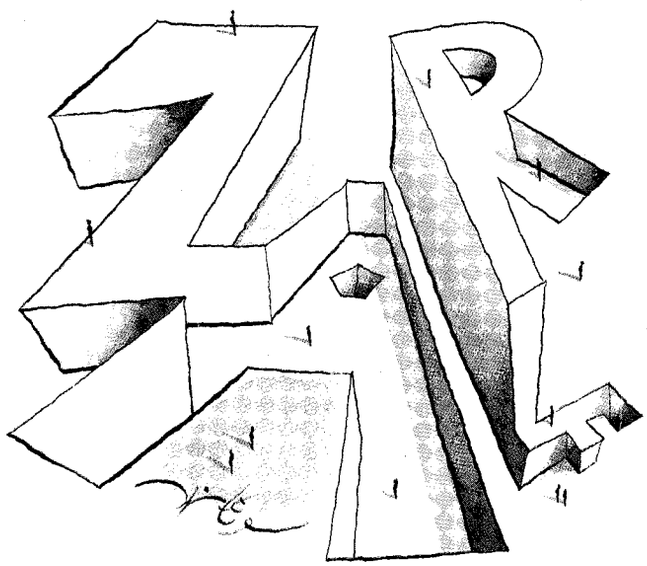

Illustration by Michael C. Witte

ZARF *national-security codeword*, meaning unknown: "Effective immediately, the term *ZARF* will be treated as UNCLASSIFIED when standing alone or in conjunction with a classification marking. This action applies ONLY to the term *ZARF*. Information protected by the *ZARF* codeword will continue to require protection" (National Security Agency E-mail reprinted in *The Washington Post Magazine*).

BACKGROUND: *ZARF* is an anomaly in this space, which generally discusses new words whose definitions are in some way revealing about societal or other trends; *ZARF* is a new word whose *lack* of a definition is revealing. This is not the first time the government has essentially declassified a term without divulging its meaning. For example, in 1993 *ISSA*—possibly a kind of high-security clearance—was named as a requirement in an employment ad placed by a spy headhunter, without ever being defined. ("I can't tell you what an *ISSA* is, but the person who's got one will know," the headhunter told a reporter.) The memo declassifying *ZARF* was obtained last fall through a Freedom of Information Act request by Steven Aftergood. Aftergood, who is himself no stranger to codes and classifications (he is the director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists), believes, having searched for the word on the Internet, that it might pertain to research on defeating enemy computer systems, or, alternatively, to intercepting electronic signals by satellite. The National Security Agency has declined to comment, and the meaning already in the dictionary is no help either: the only listing for *zarf* (sometimes spelled *zurf*) defines it as an Arabic-based word for a holder for a cup of coffee.

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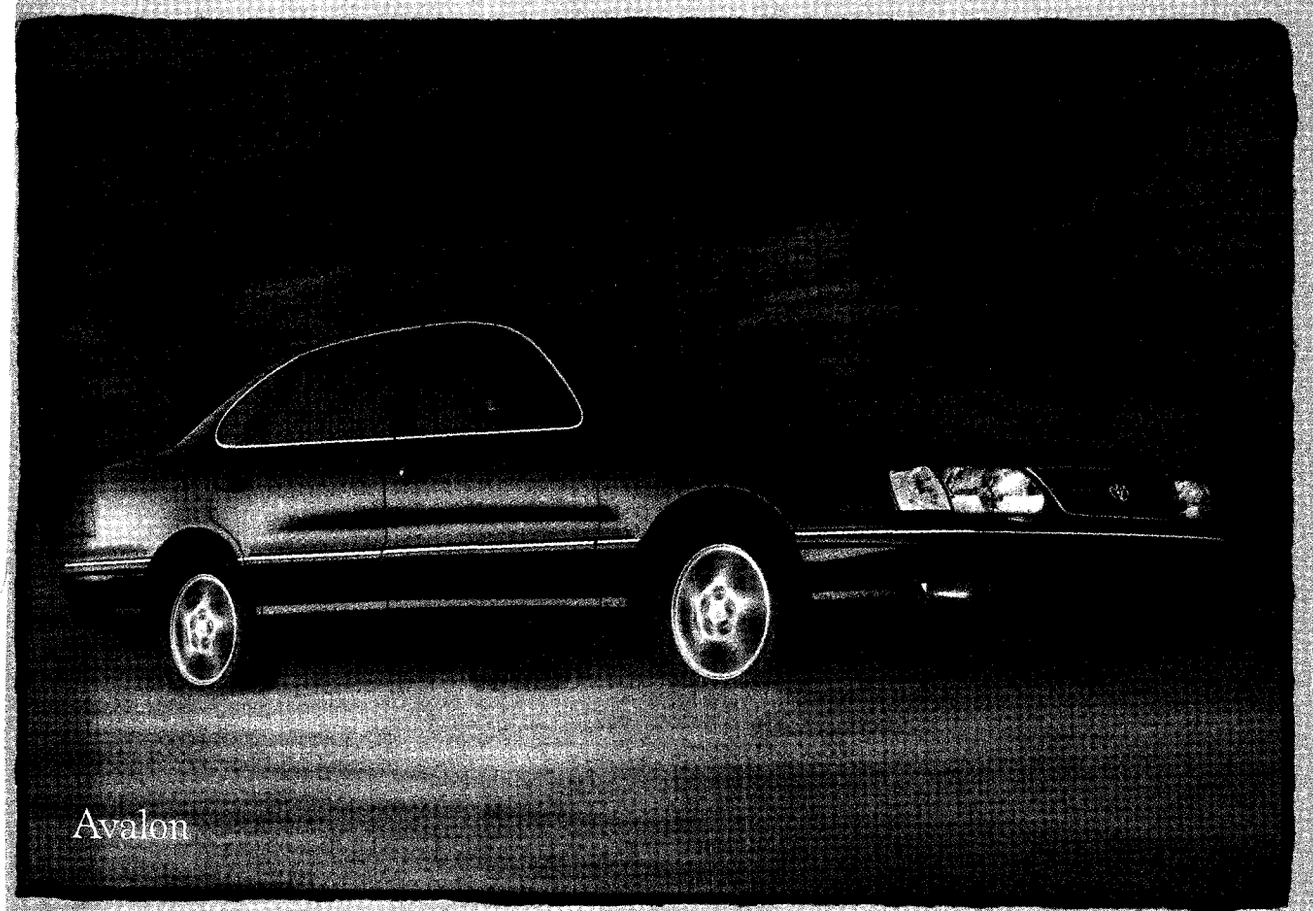

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